

COMMUNITY JOURNALISM THEN AND NOW: A COMPARISON OF  
COMMUNITY-MINDED BROADCASTERS OF THE 1960S AND THE 1990S

By

JOSEPH L. GLOVER

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2000

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the members of my committee--F. Leslie Smith, Bernell E. Tripp, David H. Ostroff, John W. Wright, and Thomas P. Auxter--for their suggestions and insights. I am particularly grateful to my chairman, F. Leslie Smith, for the many hours he spent critiquing this work and for introducing me to the pleasures of the rewrite. I am grateful to Bernell Tripp for introducing me to the fascinating world of history and for trying to teach me how it is done. I am also grateful to Tom Auxter for showing me a new way to look at the ethics of communication.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
ABSTRACT .....	vii
CHAPTERS	
1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
Background .....	2
Three Broadcast Community Journalists .....	13
Joe Brechner .....	14
Norm Davis .....	16
Ralph Renick .....	19
Problem, Purpose, Research Questions, Methodology, Significance, Scope and Limitations .....	20
Problem .....	21
Purpose .....	22
Research Questions .....	22
Significance .....	23
Methodology .....	24
Scope and Limitations .....	28
2 LITERATURE REVIEW .....	32
Community Journalism .....	32
Beyond a Proper Literature Review: Partisan Viewpoints .....	57
Social Responsibility Theory .....	65
Works on Brechner, Davis, and Renick .....	65
3 THE HUTCHINS COMMISSION: A FOUNDATION FOR COMMUNITY JOURNALISM .....	74
The Commission Is Formed .....	75
Press Reaction .....	79
Commission Goals .....	83

	Recommendations to Government .....	84
	Recommendations to the Press .....	87
	Recommendations to the Public .....	88
	Citizens' Commission .....	90
	Effects of the Report .....	92
4	COMMUNITY JOURNALISM: THE DEVIL IN DISGUISE?	
	HUTCHINS IN THE NINETIES .....	95
	Selfless or Self-Serving? .....	96
	The Community Journalism Projects Sponsored by	
	the Pew Center for Civic Journalism .....	99
	Charlotte .....	104
	Madison .....	105
	Tallahassee .....	107
	Boston .....	109
	Seattle .....	111
	Columbus .....	112
	New Orleans .....	114
5	ANOTHER DILEMMA OF COMMUNITY JOURNALISM: THE	
	INDIVIDUAL VERSUS THE MAJORITY .....	119
6	STATE OF THE TV EDITORIAL IN THE 1960S .....	130
	Impact of Regulations .....	131
	Timid Editorialists .....	137
	Network Guidance .....	143
	Local Stations .....	145
7	THE STATE OF FLORIDA AND THE U.S. IN MID-	
	20 <sup>TH</sup> CENTURY .....	155
	The 1960s in America .....	156
	Civil Rights Background in Florida .....	161
	Imported Attitudes .....	165
	The Ku Klux Klan in Florida .....	169
	A Statewide View .....	172
	St. Augustine .....	173
	Tampa .....	176
	Orlando .....	180
	Miami .....	186
	History of Consolidation Attempts in	
	Jacksonville .....	187



8	RALPH RENICK--FLORIDA'S FIRST BROADCAST EDITORIALIST .....	197
	The Nation's First Nightly TV Editorials .....	198
	The Renick Editorials .....	204
	The Crusades .....	211
	The "B-Girl" Editorials .....	213
	The Restaurant Crusade .....	216
	The Crime Crusade .....	223
	Renick and Civil Rights .....	230
	Jacksonville .....	233
	St. Augustine .....	236
	New Orleans .....	243
	Los Angeles .....	244
	Miami .....	246
9	NORM DAVIS AND THE EDITORIALS OF WJXT-TV .....	265
	The Editorials Begin .....	267
	Davis Background .....	268
	The Davis Editorial Campaign .....	273
	Other Issues Being Covered by the Press in the Mid-Sixties .....	277
	The WJXT School Editorials .....	281
	City and County Services Deteriorate .....	291
	The WJXT-TV Investigations .....	294
	The Grand Jury .....	307
	The Indictments .....	308
	Corn Patch Camp .....	309
	What The People Involved Say About WJXT's Role .....	314
	What Others Have Said About WJXT's Role .....	321
10	JOE BRECHNER'S STRATEGY FOR ORLANDO, FLORIDA: THE 1960S CIVIL RIGHTS EDITORIALS OF WFTV-TV .....	326
	Brechner's Motivations .....	329
	The Brechner Family Moves to Orlando .....	332
	Editorial Themes .....	337
	Examples of Editorials Using Brechner's Four Themes .....	341
	It Could Happen Here .....	341
	Praise .....	342
	Patriotism .....	346
	It's Good Business .....	353
	A Voice For Minorities .....	355

	Despair .....	357
	Beyond Editorials .....	358
11	CONCLUSION AND ANALYSIS .....	368
	Summary .....	368
	Brechtner .....	371
	Davis .....	374
	Renick .....	375
	Conclusions .....	376
	What is Community Journalism? .....	377
	Brechtner, Davis, and Renick: Real Community Journalists? .....	378
	Worthy of Imitation? .....	380
	Community Journalists of the 1990s .....	380
	Discussion .....	382
	Leading the Way .....	387
	Friends in the Front Office .....	389
	Motivation is Primary .....	391
	Suggestions for Further Research .....	392
APPENDICES		
A	SAMPLE OF THE EDITORIALS OF JOE BRECHNER .....	398
B	SAMPLE OF THE EDITORIALS OF NORM DAVIS .....	424
C	SAMPLE OF THE EDITORIALS OF RALPH RENICK .....	444
	REFERENCES .....	464
	BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH .....	487

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School  
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

COMMUNITY JOURNALISM THEN AND NOW: A COMPARISON OF  
COMMUNITY-MINDED BROADCASTERS OF THE 1960S AND THE 1990S

By

Joseph L. Glover

August 2000

Chairman: F. Leslie Smith  
Major Department: Mass Communication

This dissertation is a historical study of three broadcast editorialists working in Florida during the tumultuous 1960s. The three editorialists were Joe Brechner, owner and general manager of WFTV-TV in Orlando; Norm Davis, editorial director of WJXT-TV in Jacksonville; and Ralph Renick, news and editorial director of WTVJ-TV in Miami. The works of Brechner and Davis examined in this study revolve around single editorial campaigns. In the case of Brechner, the topic was civil rights. Davis focused on governmental corruption and inefficiency. Renick, who editorialized first and for the longest period of time, conducted several editorial campaigns. His work

on governmental corruption, crime, restaurant sanitation, and civil rights are examined herein.

The three editorialists are compared to members of the press in the 1990s who called themselves "community journalists." The following questions are asked: (1) What is community journalism? (2) Were the three editorialists who are the focus of this dissertation community journalists? (3) Should modern journalists consider Brechner, Davis, and Renick journalists to be emulated?

In order to avoid either present-mindedness or past-mindedness, particular attention is paid to context. The regulatory climate for 1960s broadcasters who chose to editorialize is examined. The events of the decade are a major part of the context. It was those events from which the editorialists chose their topics. Lastly, motivation of editorialists and journalists studied for this work is examined. The touchstone for motivation is existential communitarianism, defined for this study as "concerned primarily with community, but drawing from the principles of existentialism to include concern for individuals within the community as well as concern for personal responsibility." It is within that framework that the efforts of the subjects of this research are measured.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a historical study of three broadcast editorialists, working in Florida during the tumultuous 1960s. The three editorialists were Joe Brechner, owner and general manager of WFTV-TV in Orlando; Norm Davis, editorial director of WJXT-TV in Jacksonville; and Ralph Renick, news and editorial director of WTVJ-TV in Miami. The works of Brechner and Davis examined in this study revolve around single editorial campaigns. In the case of Brechner, the topic was civil rights. Davis focused on governmental corruption and inefficiency. Renick, who editorialized first and for the longest period of time, conducted several editorial campaigns. His work on governmental corruption, crime, restaurant sanitation, and civil rights is examined herein.

The three editorialists are compared to members of the press in the 1990s who called themselves "community journalists."

This chapter introduces the reader to the three editorialists, to the community journalism against which they are measured, and to the problems that motivated 1990s members of the press to begin calling themselves "community journalists."

### Background

Since the Hutchins Commission met in the mid-1940s and completed *A Free and Responsible Press*,<sup>1</sup> some members of the United States press have been trying to prove that they can be both free and responsible.<sup>2</sup> According to many press critics, the attempt has been a dismal failure. A recent Newseum survey of public perception of the press reveals some discouraging, although not surprising, news for journalists.<sup>3</sup>

The 1999 survey frequently referred to the results of a similar 1997 survey and found that "the news media are in deep trouble."<sup>4</sup> The 1997 survey found:

---

<sup>1</sup> Commission on Freedom of the Press, *A Free and Responsible Press: A General Report on Mass Communication: Newspapers, Radio, Motion Pictures, Magazines, and Books* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (1947), 4.

<sup>2</sup> James Fallows, *Breaking the News* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> "State of the First Amendment: A survey of public attitudes," a Freedom Forum survey, sponsored by the First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

- Although most people trust most or all of what ministers, priests, rabbis and doctors say, only 53% place similar trust in their local TV anchors. Even fewer trust what network TV anchors say and just under a third trust newspaper reporters.
- Ethically, people see journalists not as the equals of teachers, doctors and priests, but as being among those with agendas to advance--politicians, lawyers and corporate officials.
- Special interests are pulling strings in newsrooms, most Americans believe. They think profit motives, politicians, media owners, big business and advertisers influence the way news is reported and presented.
- Surprisingly, what bothers people most about journalists is not that they favor a "liberal point of view," but that journalists are insensitive to people's pain when covering disasters and accidents. Most people also are more strongly concerned about journalists spending too much time on the personal lives of public officials, paying too little attention to issues of concern to young people, using unidentified sources and offering their own opinions than they are about liberal bias.
- A majority of the Americans surveyed (64%) also say a major problem with news is that it is too sensational.<sup>5</sup>

The 1999 survey, according to the Freedom Forum, indicated public trust in the media was diminishing even further. Respondents expressed a 15-percent increase in the belief that the press has too much freedom. More respondents said newspapers should not be able to publish freely without

---

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from the 1997 Newseum Survey by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center and the Newseum on the Freedom Forum home page, <http://www.freedomforum.org/index.html>. The Roper Center administered the questionnaire to 1,500 American adults. The sampling error is 2.5 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

government approval, that they should not be allowed to endorse or criticize political candidates, that journalists should not be able to use hidden cameras for newsgathering, and should not be able to publish government secrets.<sup>6</sup>

The number of people who felt the press had too much freedom also grew in 1999. The number who felt the press should be able to keep sources confidential fell, and Table 1 shows that "the bad news just keeps coming."

The Freedom Forum reports went on to say:

These findings indicate that the news media are in deep trouble with the American public. A variety of studies, surveys, and focus groups document a real resentment of the press and its practices among Americans, who characterize the news media as arrogant, inaccurate, superficial, sensational, biased and bent. Worse, they apparently believe that the press is part of the problem, rather than part of the solution.

In a study conducted earlier this year by the Pew Research Center for The People & The Press, 32% of those surveyed said they thought the media were declining in influence, compared to 17% in 1985. The number of those saying the media protects democracy dropped from 54% in

---

<sup>6</sup> The 1999 Freedom Forum Survey by the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut, The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center and the Newseum. Found at: <http://www.freedomforum.org/first/sofa/1999/welcome.asp>. The survey results are based on telephone interviews by the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut with 1,001 adults, ages eighteen or older, conducted 26 February to 24 March 1999. Margin of error is plus or minus 3 percent with a 95 percent confidence level.



Table 1. Results of 1999 Freedom Forum Survey.

Even though the U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom of the press, government has placed some restrictions on it. Overall, do you think the press in America has too much freedom to do what it wants, too little freedom to do what it wants, or is the amount of freedom the press has about right?

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1999</u>
Too much freedom	38%	53%
Too little freedom	9%	7%
About right	50%	37%
DK/Ref	3%	2%

Newspapers should be allowed to publish freely without government approval of a story.

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1999</u>
Strongly agree	56%	38%
Mildly agree	24%	27%
Mildly disagree	11%	14%
Strongly disagree	6%	18%
DK/Ref	3%	3%

Journalists should be allowed to keep a news source confidential.

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1999</u>
Strongly agree	58%	48%
Mildly agree	27%	31%
Mildly disagree	6%	10%
Strongly disagree	6%	9%
DK/Ref	2%	3%

Broadcasters should be allowed to televise courtroom trials.

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1999</u>
Strongly agree	28%	34%
Mildly agree	23%	33%
Mildly disagree	19%	13%
Strongly disagree	25%	17%
DK/Ref	4%	3%

Newspapers should be allowed to endorse or criticize political candidates.

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1999</u>
Strongly agree	43%	35%
Mildly agree	26%	28%
Mildly disagree	11%	14%
Strongly disagree	18%	22%
DK/Ref	2%	2%

Table 1--Continued.

The news media should be allowed to report government secrets that have come to journalists' attention.

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1999</u>
Strongly agree	35%	23%
Mildly agree	26%	25%
Mildly disagree	14%	18%
Strongly disagree	21%	30%
DK/Ref	5%	3%

Television networks should be allowed to project winners of an election while people are still voting.

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1999</u>
Strongly agree	15%	11%
Mildly agree	16%	18%
Mildly disagree	17%	19%
Strongly disagree	51%	51%
DK/Ref	1%	1%

High school students should be allowed to report controversial issues in their student newspapers without approval of school authorities.

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1999</u>
Strongly agree	24%	19%
Mildly agree	21%	18%
Mildly disagree	23%	27%
Strongly disagree	29%	33%
DK/Ref	3%	3%

Journalists should be allowed to use hidden cameras in their reporting.

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1999</u>
Strongly agree	13%	9%
Mildly agree	18%	18%
Mildly disagree	20%	18%
Strongly disagree	45%	54%
DK/Ref	3%	3%

Broadcasters should be allowed to televise the proceedings of the U.S. Supreme Court.

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1999</u>
Strongly agree		44%
Mildly agree		29%
Mildly disagree		11%
Strongly disagree		12%
DK/Ref		3%

Table 1--Continued.

---

Journalists should be allowed to investigate the private lives of public figures.

Strongly agree	17%
Mildly agree	21%
Mildly disagree	18%
Strongly disagree	42%
DK/Ref	1%

---

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Any group that wants should be allowed to hold a rally for a cause or issue even if it may be offensive to others in the community.

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1999</u>
Strongly agree	38%	30%
Mildly agree	34%	32%
Mildly disagree	10%	16%
Strongly disagree	15%	20%
DK/Ref	3%	3%

---

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The government should regulate what appears on television.

Strongly agree	20%
Mildly agree	25%
Mildly disagree	21%
Strongly disagree	32%
DK/Ref	2%

---

1985 to 45%. Conversely, 38% said that the media hurt democracy; only 23% said that in 1985.<sup>7</sup>

These complaints sound quite similar to the complaints put forward by the Hutchins Commission in 1947, a fact noted in the Freedom Forum report. The commission, albeit unintentionally, laid the foundation for a 1990s journalism phenomenon that was promoted as the road to salvation for an ailing press. It is called "community journalism," "civic journalism," "communitarian journalism," public journalism," "solutions journalism" and sometimes "conversations journalism."<sup>8</sup> The terms are frequently used interchangeably by journalists and will be used interchangeably here, although "community journalism" will be the preferred and most often used term. That phenomenon, however, is a siren song that may lead journalism in the opposite direction.

Defining the phenomenon is also difficult. There are many definitions of community journalism. Davis Merritt, now senior editor at the *Wichita Eagle*, defines it as "a pragmatic recognition that people flooded with contextless,

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> As of May 2000 there was still a discussion underway about drawing fine distinctions between these terms. At the 1998 conference on public journalism at the University of South Carolina attendees agreed to use the terms interchangeably, at least for the length of the conference, to avoid further confusing the issue. This dissertation follows that example.

fragmentary, episodic, value-neutral information can't make effective work of their decision-making."<sup>9</sup> New York University journalism professor Jay Rosen writes, "Traditional journalism worries about remaining properly detached. Public journalism worries about becoming properly attached. So: public journalism becomes the undeveloped art of attachment to the communities in which journalists do their work."<sup>10</sup>

Ed Lambeth, a professor of journalism at the University of Missouri-Columbia, says there are several steps in doing public journalism. Journalists must:

- Examine alternative ways to frame stories on important community issues.
- Choose frames that stand the best chance to stimulate citizen deliberation and build public understanding of issues.
- Listen systematically to the stories and ideas of citizens even while protecting [press] freedom to choose what to cover.
- Take the initiative to report on major public problems in a way that advances public knowledge of possible solutions and the values served by alternative courses of action.
- Pay continuing and systematic attention to how well and how credibly [the press] is communicating with the public.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Edmund B. Lambeth, Philip E. Mayer, and Esther Thorsen, *Assessing Public Journalism* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 90.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

Another proponent of community journalism is Jennie Buckner. Buckner is the editor of the *Charlotte Observer* and sees public journalism as utilitarian: "When writing about public life, we try to provide readers with the information they need to function as citizens."<sup>12</sup> Billy Winn of the *Columbus (Ga.) Ledger-Enquirer* defines the practice in terms closer to classical communitarianism<sup>13</sup> when he says, "You must risk some of yourself; you must get into the boat with the people."<sup>14</sup>

This communitarian attitude leads to a definition that grows out of the present study and becomes evident in the work of the three broadcasters around whom this research revolves. It is a definition that most accurately describes what the three editorialists were presenting to 1960s television audiences. A community journalist is, quite

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>13</sup> Communitarianism is described as "the thesis that the community, rather than the individual, the state, the nation, or any other entity, is and should be at the center of our analysis and our value system" in Ted Honderich, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 143.

<sup>14</sup> Billy Winn, Lecture at University of Florida, Spring 1996.

simply, someone who is willing to put the interests of community above one's own interests.

This definition is not what most community journalists espouse. Normally, community journalism is an attempt to make the journalist part of the community and, therefore, a beneficiary of the public journalism project. That is not what Ralph Renick, Joe Brechner, and Norm Davis intended. They intended one thing--that their editorials would contribute to the social health of their communities. In each case, it was communitarianism with an important additional factor--an element of existentialism.<sup>15</sup> Each of these editorialists was intent on making the most of his talents to enrich the lives of his community and the individuals in those communities rather than surrendering to the "tyranny of the majority" or waiting for someone else to right the wrongs they saw. In this way, they were unlike

---

<sup>15</sup> Defined in *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* as "A chiefly 20<sup>th</sup> Century philosophy that is centered upon the analysis of existence specif. of individual human beings, that regards human existence as not exhaustively describable or understandable in idealistic or scientific terms, and that stresses the freedom and responsibility of the individual, the irreducible uniqueness of an ethical or religious situation, and usu. the isolation and subjective experiences (as of anxiety, guilt, dread, anguish) of an individual therein." (Springfield, MA: G & C. Merriam Company, 1976), 291.

communitarians who sacrifice individualism and individual rights for the sake of community.<sup>16</sup> They were existential-communitarians, a seemingly self-contradictory term, but an accurate description. This study is concerned with determining whether they were community journalists before community journalism became a journalism movement.

The Hutchins Commission, which will be examined in chapter 3 of this study, foreshadowed some of the ideas embodied in community journalism. The commission's findings reveal that there were many of the same concerns about the press in the 1940s as there were fifty years later. Chapter 4 will outline current attempts to improve public perception of press practices and practitioners. It will also be revealed that those attempts, through community journalism, are misguided and sometimes disingenuous.

In addition, this study will show that what is sometimes referred to as "old-fashioned journalism in new clothes"<sup>17</sup> is, in fact, the way to reverse the erosion of public trust in journalism and, in particular, television journalism. The

---

<sup>16</sup> Ralph D. Barney, "Community Journalism: Good Intentions, Questionable Practice," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 11, 3 (1996): 140-151.

<sup>17</sup> M. Gordon, "Civic Journalism: Involving the Public," *The Seattle Times*, 17 April 1996, B5.



present chapter will briefly introduce three 1960s broadcasters who practiced community journalism long before it had acquired the name and, most important, practiced community journalism in a manner classical communitarians would consider appropriate. The work of these three broadcasters will be the primary focus of this dissertation.

Much of the background for these early chapters is based on the work of newspaper journalists because it is the newspapers that have most actively promoted community journalism. As is noted below, newspaper journalists frequently involve broadcasters in their projects, usually as tag-alongs using, and being used by, their print partners.

### Three Broadcast Community Journalists

There are many different views of community journalism and communitarianism. Louis Hodges of Washington and Lee University frequently writes on issues of journalism ethics. It is Hodges' view of communitarianism as a means of enhancing individual liberty that most closely fits the approach taken by the three editorialists who are the subject of this study. They were all most concerned about their communities but did not allow themselves to be swallowed by the communitarian tendency to allow the group to become more

important than the individuals for which it was established.<sup>18</sup> All three broadcasters used editorials to accomplish their purposes. Unlike many 1990s community journalists, all three considered ratings and income secondary to operating in the best interests of the individuals who made up their communities.

Because all three felt it was their duty to better their communities, all three can be considered existential communitarians. "Existential communitarianism" is a term that must be defined for complete understanding of the discussion that follows. So it will be possible to refer back to what is meant by existential communitarianism, the definition, which will be based upon the preceding description of the actions of Brechner, Davis, and Renick, will be established for the rest of this dissertation as follows: Concerned primarily with community, but drawing from the principles of existentialism to include concern for individuals within the community as well as concern for personal responsibility.

#### Joe Brechner

Joe Brechner was principal owner and manager of Channel 9 in Orlando, first as WLOF-TV, then as WFTV-TV from 1958 to

---

<sup>18</sup> Barney, "Community Journalism," 145.

1984. When he arrived in Orlando in 1953 to acquire part ownership in radio station WLOF-AM, he had already established a reputation for speaking out for causes he thought in the interests of the community.<sup>19</sup>

Brechner had laid the groundwork for his active part in community affairs at WGAY radio in Silver Spring, Maryland. Brechner and John Kluge founded WGAY-AM-FM when they were released from the U.S. Army following World War II. Money from the sale of WGAY financed Brechner's move into the Orlando broadcasting market. Although Kluge owned a portion of the Orlando operation, he was moving in other directions, and it was Brechner who would build the Orlando television station, using it as a platform for his brand of community journalism. Brechner's most frequently visited editorial topic was civil rights. At a time when there were few integrated facilities and when there was a strong Ku Klux Klan presence in Orlando, a city with many of the characteristics of other southern cities in the 1960s, Brechner was not only hiring African-Americans to work at his

---

<sup>19</sup> Joe Glover, "Joe Brechner's Castle in the Air - The WGAY Years: 1946-47," 2000. Unpublished paper presented at the 2000 Broadcast Education Association annual conference in Las Vegas, Nevada.

station, he was campaigning for equal rights for all Americans.<sup>20</sup>

Norm Davis

On 8 August 1967, the voters of Jacksonville and Duval County, Florida, went to the polls to decide what form of government they wanted. The choice was simple. Would they continue to have what critics of the area's political system considered a redundant, wasteful, corrupt form of government with one group of elected and appointed officials for Jacksonville and another for Duval County, or would they clean house by consolidating their governments? They had been subjected to a vigorous, sometimes bitter, campaign with strong arguments on both sides. Many office holders and their cronies who had benefited under the existing system pulled out all the stops in their attempts to maintain the status quo. They tried to convince black voters that consolidation was an attempt to keep power out of the hands of the African-American community.<sup>21</sup> They argued directly to the African-American community that whites from the suburbs

---

<sup>20</sup> Joe Glover, "Joe Brechner's Strategy for Orlando, Florida: The 1960s Civil Rights Editorials of WFTV-TV," 1998. Unpublished paper presented at 1998 American Journalism Historians Association Annual Conference in Louisville, KY.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Martin, *Consolidation: Jacksonville, Duval County* (Jacksonville: Convention Press, Inc., 1968), 160.

would control the city. They claimed that consolidation was a communist-inspired idea.<sup>22</sup>

Residents of areas outside the city had been bombarded with warnings that they would be giving up the independence they had always enjoyed and that they would be paying taxes to support the workings of the City of Jacksonville. If they voted against consolidation, citizens of the area would have been continuing a long tradition of refusing to become part of a massive area government.<sup>23</sup>

Why then did this vote turn out differently from earlier referenda on Jacksonville area consolidation? Why, when the ballots were counted, had area voters approved consolidation by an almost 2-1 margin?<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, why had county voters approved consolidation by a margin of 8-5? Given the similarities between the 1967 election and other elections involving issues of combined governments for the Jacksonville area, which will be described in chapter 7, what was the difference in this one?

Several factors contributed to the outcome in this complicated issue, such as strong leadership, willingness of

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., XI-XIII.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 224.

consolidation backers to tweak the plan to accommodate opponents, strong African-American support, teamwork between legislators and local proponents, almost wholehearted business support, and strong media support once backers of the plan started their work.<sup>25</sup> One of the major differences, however, was the work of a group of investigative reporters at television station WJXT.

The reporters, led by News Director Bill Grove and Editorial Director Norm Davis, started their work in early 1964. Less than three years later, in late 1996, when the Local Government Study Commission released its recommendation for consolidation, eight county and city officials who had been subjects of WJXT investigative reports and editorials were indicted on 104 counts. The counts involved expenditures of government funds for personal items, the use of government vehicles for personal needs, padding payrolls, subverting the competitive bidding system to award contracts to favorite companies, bribery, perjury, and grand larceny. WJXT was alone in its zeal to uncover the wrongs in area government. It is impossible to prove, but well within the realm of possibility that had WJXT not begun exposing

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 226-234.

malfeasance in government in 1964 there would not have been a successful 1967 consolidation movement.

The editorial crusade undertaken by WJXT targeted corrupt government in the city and county, put WJXT income in danger, and put the lives of station personnel at risk. It was, nonetheless, another example of genuine community journalism.<sup>26</sup>

### Ralph Renick

Ralph Renick served as news director and anchor of WTVJ-TV in Miami for thirty-five years, commencing in 1950. The station began doing editorials in 1957, with Renick as editorial director and presenter. When his tenure at WTVJ was over, he estimated that he had delivered more than 50,000 editorials.<sup>27</sup> Many of Renick's editorials, like those of WJXT, involved local government corruption.<sup>28</sup>

A crusade against governmental inadequacies and another against unsanitary conditions in Miami restaurants, as well

---

<sup>26</sup> Joe Glover, "Media Influence on City-County Consolidation in Jacksonville and Duval County, Florida, 1967." Unpublished paper, 1997, University of Florida.

<sup>27</sup> S.L. Alexander, "May the Good News Be Yours: Ralph Renick and Florida's First News" *Mass Comm Review* 19, 2 (Winter-Spring 1992): 57-63.

<sup>28</sup> Gerald Vincent Flannery, "Local Television Editorializing: A Case Study of the Editorials of Ralph Renick on WTVJ-TV" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio University, 1966).

as continuing editorials on race relations, best illustrated the communitarianism aspects of Renick's editorializing. In the first case, seventy-three editorials against inadequate law enforcement were broadcast in 1966. In the second case, a series of twelve editorials about unsanitary conditions in Miami restaurants aired in 1973.<sup>29</sup> In all three crusades, Renick was risking the station's bottom-line. The restaurant campaign, for instance, brought "an almost daily danger of advertising losses and lawsuits," as well as resulting in assault and battery charges against a restaurateur who physically attacked a WTVJ reporter and cameraman.<sup>30</sup>

Problem, Purpose, Research Questions, Methodology,  
Significance, Scope and Limitations

The function of this portion of the introductory chapter is to outline the structure of this research. It is divided into six sections. In the first section, the problem of lack of public trust in the press is described. In part two, the purpose of this research, which is to illuminate possible remedies for the problem, is outlined. Part three lists the questions to be answered. Methodology is described in part

---

<sup>29</sup> Paul Ashdown, "Television and the Editorial Crusade: A Case Study of WTVJ-TV, 1965-1973" (Ph.D. diss., Bowling Green State University, 1975).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 130.



four. In part five, the significance of this work is set forth. Finally, scope and limitations are specified in part six.

### Problem

The first problem to be faced in this study is determining what it is that makes community journalism community journalism, to determine what the qualities are that distinguish community journalism from standard journalism.

A second problem is distinguishing what it was that made Joe Brechner, Norm Davis, and Ralph Renick community journalists, distinguishing what it was that made them different from journalists in the 1990s who claimed they were practicing community journalism.

A third problem is determining what community journalism is supposed to do, and if it is not doing that, why not? This third problem is reflected in the Freedom Forum surveys cited in this chapter. Journalists are under fire for failing to shed light on their communities' problems, for failing to investigate stories in depth, for favoring stories or reporting techniques that sensationalize the news. Readers and viewers are increasingly less inclined to grant the press the full protections of the First Amendment.

Newspapers and broadcast news organizations are suffering losses in readership and viewership. In order to win those news consumers back, some members of the press are turning to community journalism and, in so doing, may be widening the gap between news consumers and news reporters.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study will be to compare and contrast the community journalism of today with the community journalism practiced by Brechner, Davis, and Renick. With that comparison as a reference point, the research attempts to determine who the real practitioners of public journalism are, or were. This is a topic important to today's journalists who are searching for ways to restore their credibility and public trust. The present study suggests it is possible Brechner, Renick, and Davis can light the way.

#### Research Questions

As indicated above, researchers must ask, "What is it? What is community journalism?" This dissertation attempts not so much to define community journalism as it was practiced in the 1990s as to describe it. A second question to be answered by this study is, "Were the three editorialists who are the focus of this dissertation community journalists?" That will become evident in

subsequent chapters and will be discussed in the appropriate section. Also to be answered is the question of whether today's community journalists could consider Brechner, Davis, and Renick journalists to be emulated.

### Significance

On a philosophical level, Aristotle told those at the agora that a virtuous deed is virtuous only if it is done for its own sake. If the good result of an ostensibly virtuous deed is only a by-product of the action, if the action was performed with another end in mind, then the deed is not virtuous.<sup>31</sup> If community journalism falls into the second category, it is a sham. This research attempts to determine which practitioners of community journalism were, or are, community journalists as defined above. On a more practical level, one must ask if the community journalism of today's practitioners is the way to accomplish community journalism's stated goals. That is, to bring back the audiences that have turned away from newspapers and television news in such great numbers or, would community journalism as practiced by Brechner, Renick, and Davis be more effective in the long run.

---

<sup>31</sup> Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics*, D. Ross, trans. (Oxford: Oxford Press, 1987), 53.

Additionally, the three broadcasters studied for this work working in a state that was not fully of the South or of the North. They were working in a state that was in transition and, therefore, represented a middle ground of America.

Brechner, Davis, and Renick are crucial to understanding the shift in momentum for television editorializing in the 1960s, which would pave the way for the next stage of community journalism. They are part of the continuum along which journalism has developed. Broadcasters before them avoided editorializing. In the 1960s, broadcast editorializing increased. In a limited number of cases, it was editorializing with a strong element of crusading. In more recent times, editorializing and crusading journalism have decreased, in part because of business factors.

#### Methodology

The research relies heavily on primary sources and material. The primary material is used to lay a baseline for further research. It is used to illustrate what the editorialists were doing and, when possible, what they were thinking, what their motivations were.

University of Florida journalism professor Bernell Tripp has offered five guidelines for use in determining choice of biographical subjects:

1. Depth of influence: profession/sphere; era; geographical
2. Peer recognition
3. Contribution to history as a whole
4. Access to "true voice"
5. Personal interest<sup>32</sup>

All three of the subjects of this dissertation qualify under Tripp's standards. All were influential in their profession, in their time, and in their community. All received recognition from both their professional peers and their fellow citizens. Because of the relatively short amount of time that has passed since the three editorialists were at work, it would be precipitous to attempt to determine their overall place in history. However, because they are acknowledged as having been editorial pioneers, it is not presumptuous to expect that, in time, their importance will be considered substantial. There is access to true voice in all three cases. Some of the true voice is found in the editorials written by Brechner, Davis, and Renick and some of

---

<sup>32</sup> Bernell Tripp, Class lecture in "Biography as History," 26 August 1998, University of Florida.

it in other writings. In the case of Norm Davis, it is found in personal interviews. This true voice is invaluable in revealing motivation. Personal interest in journalists who contribute to the communities in which they live fulfills the final criterion.

This research uses the many writings available on community journalism for context in the sections on current community journalism practices. There is ample background material, both secondary and primary, to provide context for the period when the three Florida editorialists were writing. Almost all of the editorials of the three Floridians are available for review. The editorials of Joe Brechner are now housed at the Orlando Historical Society. Norm Davis has kept some of his editorials in a personal archive. The Renick editorials are stored at the Wolfson Archive at the Miami-Dade Public Library.

There are writings and transcriptions of speeches from the three editorialists. Some of these works are direct comment on the process of broadcast editorializing. This information is also valuable for purposes of attempting to determine motivation. Newspapers from Miami, Jacksonville, and Orlando are a secondary source of information about Brechner, Renick, and Davis. These newspapers frequently

confirm information found in the primary material, as well as providing context.

Oral history interviews are also a major part of this research. In several interviews, Joe Brechner's widow, Marion, remembered a great deal of what was happening at WFTV-TV in the 1960s. She was in charge of public relations at the station during the period studied. Norm Davis, an attorney in Miami when this work was in progress, made himself available for interviews. Ralph Renick's brother, his mother, his oldest daughter, and his only son were all willing to discuss his life and motivations. There are two doctoral dissertations available on Renick and WTVJ-TV.<sup>33</sup> Both are described in the literature review section.

It is fortunate that there is so much information available because what emerges from the writings of various historians who consider methodology is an overall sense that rigorous attention must be paid to context, to verifying that evidence is genuine, to its true meaning, to motivation of both the historian and his/her subjects, and that no one factor can be considered sufficient cause for what has happened in the past. For that reason, particular attention

---

<sup>33</sup> Ashdown, "Editorial Crusade" and Flannery, "Local Television Editorializing."

is paid to other factors present during the time period and in the communities where the three editorialists worked.

#### Scope and Limitations

This study examines two time periods. The late 1950s through the early 1970s has been chosen for illustration of the work done by the three editorialists because it was during this time period that all three were editorially most effective.

In Jacksonville, WJXT-TV was a driving force behind the push for change in governmental structure. It was the WJXT editorials and investigative reporting that provided the motivation to make governmental consolidation a reality after a long history in Jacksonville of failure to win voter approval for consolidation.

Joe Brechner had editorialized for years on his broadcast stations. As early as the late 1940s, Brechner was a strong editorial voice in Silver Spring, Maryland, and was also writing magazine articles in support of broadcast editorializing. It was, however, in Orlando that Brechner's editorials promoting civil rights showed that a strong broadcast editorial voice in the community can make a strong and positive contribution.



In Miami during this time, Ralph Renick was editorializing on several issues. Although many of those issues, such as taxes, city government, state government, and roads were important, Renick's true communitarianism was exhibited in four editorial crusades: the first on organized crime in Miami and its effect on local law enforcement, the second on restaurant health standards, another on "B-Girl" strip joints, and a fourth on civil rights.

The present research attempts to describe and analyze the community journalism efforts of the late 1980s and 1990s. It is in this more recent period that the community journalism effort became a major factor in both print and TV journalism.<sup>34</sup> It is against this recent standard that the research measures the community journalism efforts of the three Florida editorialists.

Also included in this research is a limited examination of the news programs and documentaries of the stations where Brechner, Davis, and Renick worked. These other news-programming facets are covered only insofar as they were corollary to the editorial campaigns of the three editorialists. They help to explain the crusading nature of

---

<sup>34</sup> Michael Foley, "A Challenging New Dimension to Service," *The Irish Times*, 1 April 1988, 23.

the overall work of the three editorialists and their stations.

In addition to the chapters on context, involving civil rights in Florida and the United States during the editorialists' time period, there is personal background on the editorialists. This background attempts to illuminate their motivations in practicing community journalism, but there is no attempt to present said background as biography; that is left for later works.

This study is limited to the work of the three editorialists who are its focus and the 1990s community journalists with whom the editorialists are compared and contrasted. There is no attempt to include the work of other editorialists who were working in Florida or in other parts of the United States during the same time period.

The examination of community journalism is limited to the decade of the 1990s. In a work devoted exclusively to the origins of community journalism, it would be possible, yea necessary, to examine some part of every era of journalism history, from the days of the American Revolution to the era of the muckrakers, to the Watergate era. That is also left to later research, for to include it would take this study far afield. Furthermore, it was in the 1990s that

media outlets began calling what they were doing "community journalism."

Freedom Forum surveys in 1997 and 1999 carried "bad news" for 1990s journalists. The surveys showed that American citizens were progressively less inclined to support full First Amendment rights for the press. News readers and viewers were increasingly disillusioned with the way the press had done its job. A group of journalists, in an attempt to regain viewer and reader loyalty, began practicing community journalism. The proclaimed purpose of community journalism was to give American citizens more information with which to participate in the public life of their communities. There was in community journalism, however, also an apparent motivation of selling newspapers and building television ratings.

In an attempt to determine if community journalism of the 1990s was practiced with genuine communitarian motivations, this research compares the 1990s community journalists to three television editorialists who were working circa the 1960s and who appear to be genuine community journalists.

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature for this research comes from two areas. To determine the degree to which the three Florida editorialists were practicing community journalism, a review of the literature on community journalism is necessary. The other area deals with the editorialists themselves.

### Community Journalism

The writings on community journalism fall into two groups. The first is academic; the second, opinion--opinions that fall on either side of the community journalism debate. Even the best known of the participants in the conversation tend to offer editorials rather than research. Several of the citations in the section below on academic works on community journalism are from a 1998 conference at the University of South Carolina. Some of the articles presented at that academic conference were of no use for an academic literature review because they, too, were no more than opinion. That is the location community journalists now occupy. They are part of a movement, if it can be called

such, that is still being defined, a stage in which opinion is helping to write the definition.

Accordingly, much of the written material on community journalism is opinion. That information will be covered below. The majority of what does exist in the way of academic research on community journalism deals either with print journalism or with the philosophical underpinnings of the movement. This material is valuable to the present research for the light it sheds on what community journalism claims to be and what it actually is. It is used to illustrate that Brechner, Davis, and Renick practiced a truer form of community journalism.

*Civic Lessons: A Report on Four Civic Journalism Projects* is one of several studies funded by the Pew Center for Civic Journalism and the Pew Charitable Trusts. Esther Thorsen of the Center for Advanced Social Research at the University of Missouri and Lewis A. Friedland of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Madison studied four civic journalism projects in 1996. *Civic Lessons* included civic journalism projects in Charlotte, North Carolina; Madison, Wisconsin; San Francisco, California; and Binghamton, New York.

Thorsen and Friedland were asked to "ascertain the impact of the projects in their respective communities; to determine what kinds of projects seem to work best and why; and to see what impact the projects had on the newsrooms involved."<sup>35</sup> With the assistance of several colleagues, Friedland interviewed subjects in newsrooms, in communities where civic journalism projects were underway, and in governmental offices in those communities. In all, 400 people were interviewed.

The foreword of *Civic Lessons* stated:

By far the most significant finding in the evaluators' report is that, on the whole, civic journalism is making progress toward its goals. It benefits both the communities it serves and the overall democratic process. Most people surveyed who were aware of the four projects chosen for study reported being more knowledgeable and concerned about their communities as a result and indicated they had a stronger sense of their civic responsibilities, especially as voters.<sup>36</sup>

Thorsen and Friedland assumed correctly that not all their findings would be positive. While readers responded warmly to the projects, there was considerable resistance from within the newsrooms they studied. Editors and

---

<sup>35</sup> Esther Thorsen and Lewis A. Friedland, *Civic Lessons*, (Philadelphia: Pew Center for Civic Journalism, 1996), 1.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

reporters feared civic journalism was taking the power out of their hands and depositing it in the hands of readers.

According to Thorsen and Friedland, the success of the four civic journalism projects they studied was due to the focus on local issues, issues important to local readers and viewers. "All of the projects, in very different ways, listened to citizen concerns, took them seriously, and then invested the time, money, and experience necessary to engage in a type of sustained enterprise reporting that is becoming increasingly rare in American journalism."<sup>37</sup> It may or may not be significant that the study was commissioned and paid for by the Pew Center for Civic Journalism, but that fact should be noted.

Another research study commissioned by the Pew Center reached less positive conclusions about civic journalism. *Does Public Journalism Work? The Campaign Central Experience*, a study released by the Pew Center for Civic Journalism and *The Record* newspaper of Hackensack, New Jersey, examined the role of civic journalism in the

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 10.

1996 race for the U.S. Senate seat vacated by Bill Bradley.<sup>38</sup>

The Record had been an advocate of public journalism since 1992, expanding its coverage of political issues, as opposed to horse-race coverage, beginning with the 1992 presidential contest. More polling had been conducted on public opinions on issues and values. More news columns and editorials had been devoted to reader opinions and ideas. The Record continued, and even expanded, its public journalism approach for the 1996 races.

Blomquist and Zukin chose the "Campaign Central" project because it

presented a unique opportunity to assess the impact of public journalism. Because New Jersey does not have a single dominant statewide newspaper, it was readily possible to construct a statewide sample of adults who experienced the same campaigns for president and U.S. Senate but saw different daily newspapers. This allowed us to address an issue that challenged other researchers: the absence of a meaningful control group.<sup>39</sup>

Blomquist and Zukin reported editors who attended focus groups organized to determine the effectiveness of their

---

<sup>38</sup> David Blomquist and Cliff Zukin, *Does Public Journalism Work? The Campaign Central Experience*, 1997. Available at the web site of the Pew Center for Civic Journalism, [http://www.pewcenter.org/doingcjr/research/r\\_does.html](http://www.pewcenter.org/doingcjr/research/r_does.html).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



public journalism left the meetings "stunned and somewhat shaken." Most respondents remembered little of the public journalism section in *The Record*. Most *Record* readers in the focus groups did not even remember the public journalism section when it was passed around the room. It was the candidates' television commercials that most respondents remembered.

The researchers concluded:

*Record* readers were no more interested in the election or knowledgeable about the candidates and the issues than readers of other New Jersey newspapers. They had about the same level of trust in politics as other newspaper readers, and were not significantly more likely to vote or to talk about the election with people outside their family, once demographic differences were controlled. Their opinions of *The Record* and its political coverage were roughly comparable to the opinions of other New Jersey readers about their local newspaper.<sup>40</sup>

Blomquist and Zukin also concluded that journalists are limited in their ability to dictate how, or if, citizens can be reconnected to their political systems.

As part of their study, Blomquist and Zukin took a closer view of the public journalism project in Charlotte, North Carolina, which is outlined elsewhere in this dissertation. They found that, despite a more optimistic

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

report by the *Charlotte Observer*, only one in four readers noticed anything different about the *Observer's* political coverage after the newspaper had shifted to public journalism techniques. The project involving the *Observer* was part of a larger, statewide, project involving fifteen newspapers and television stations throughout North Carolina. Blomquist and Zukin reported that only one in four North Carolina voters were even aware of the project.

James R. Bowers, Blair Claflin, and Gary Walker, in a paper prepared for the 1998 Annual Meeting of the New England Political Science Association, reported on the effects of a five-year civic journalism project in Rochester, New York. Bowers and his co-authors studied the work done by Rochester's daily newspaper, the *Democrat and Chronicle*; Rochester's public television and radio outlet, WXXI; and commercial television station WOKR-TV. WOKR-TV did not join the effort until 1996.<sup>41</sup> The five-year undertaking involved

---

<sup>41</sup> James R. Bowers, Blair Claflin and Gary walker, *The Impact of Civic Journalism On Voting Behavior in State-Wide Referendums: A Case Study From Rochester, New York* (Paper prepared for presentation at the 1998 Annual Meeting of the New England Political Science Association. Available at the web site of the Pew Center for Civic Journalism, [http://www.pewcenter.org/doingcj.research/r\\_does.html](http://www.pewcenter.org/doingcj.research/r_does.html)

the Rochester Mayor's race in 1993 and the 1995 election for Monroe County Executive.

The partners in the civic journalism project made a decision to move beyond campaign coverage when the Pew Center for Civic Journalism awarded them \$35,000 to put together a series on the condition of the educational system in Rochester. The first project involving all three of the partners was the "Make Us Safe" project in 1996. Make Us Safe was aimed at curbing youth violence in Rochester.<sup>42</sup>

The first issue faced by partners in the Rochester project was that the New York State Constitution requires a referendum be held every twenty years to ask voters whether the state should hold a new constitutional convention. "Nineteen Ninety-seven was such a year."<sup>43</sup> The partners attempted to recruit other news organizations in other parts of the state to participate but were, for the most part, unsuccessful. Bowers and the other researchers wrote that the failure to expand the constitutional convention civic journalism campaign provided an opportunity to determine if

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

the campaign would bring out voters in larger numbers than in areas where there had been no such campaign.

Bowers, Claflin, and Walker discovered that was exactly what had happened. Approximately 80 percent of the voters came to the polls in the six-county Rochester area, only 71 percent in the remainder of the upstate area, and only 36 percent in New York City. The previous attempts at civic journalism campaigns had not been nearly as successful. Bowers and the others concluded that on issues, such as the constitutional convention question, "where there are no traditional cues and determinants of political behavior at work," civic journalism is more likely to have an impact. On issues involving more traditional political conflict, such as general elections, there is not as likely to be a major civic journalism influence. "Additionally," said Bowers and associates, "it is important to emphasize that even if there were no assessment issues surrounding its impact, the practice of civic journalism cannot be expected in only a few years to turn around the decline in public life that has taken a generation to accomplish."<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

Editorial page involvement in public journalism projects and efforts was examined in the 1998 Ph.D. dissertation of Camille Renee Kraeplin at the University of Texas at Austin. In *The Role of the Editorial Page in Newspaper-Based Public Journalism*, Kraeplin reported on the results of a mail survey distributed to members of the National Conference of Editorial Writers. The respondents were asked questions designed to determine to what extent their knowledge of and involvement in public journalism influenced their attitudes toward the movement. They were asked how much they knew about public journalism, if they agreed with the movement's basic concepts, if their editorial departments had participated in public journalism projects, what those projects involved, and how successful the projects had been.<sup>45</sup>

Kraeplin's data showed that most of the respondents were supporters of public journalism, even though most of them were skeptical of the movement. The respondents also believed that the priorities of public journalism corresponded with the priorities of their own editorial

---

<sup>45</sup> Kraeplin, Camille Renee, "The Role of the Editorial Page in Newspaper-Based Public Journalism" (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1998).

departments, but they were concerned that pursuing those priorities might compromise newsroom objectivity.

Kraeplin concluded that the most significant obstacle on the road to acceptance of public journalism by members of the working press might be misperceptions about public journalism philosophy. Kraeplin also reported she had found support for a more active editorial presence in public journalism projects. Opposition could be reduced, wrote Kraeplin, by giving the editorial department primary control over public journalism efforts within the newsroom. Such a move, suggested Kraeplin, would allay the fears of those in the newsroom who feared losing the proper reportorial distance from the subjects of their reports while, at the same time, lessen the fears of editorial writers who feel public journalism projects are an intrusion into an area that is normally reserved for the editorial department.

John R. Bender and Charlyne Berens have also attempted to determine who within the ranks of journalists is most likely to support public journalism. Bender and Berens asked, "What leads some journalists to embrace and others to abhor public journalism?" Specifically, these researchers, in a survey sent to 268 weekly and daily newspapers, were trying to determine if characteristics such as age,

education, and market size affect acceptance of public journalism.<sup>46</sup>

Bender and Berens reported, "For the most part, the respondents took positions consistent with the principles and goals of public journalism," showing overwhelming support for the newspapers that try to make a difference in their communities, and try to involve citizens in public debate in an effort to improve a community's public life. The research showed that journalists who start at weeklies are more likely to agree with the precepts of public journalism than those who start at dailies. Older journalists displayed no more resistance to the tenets of public journalism than younger journalists. Editors were less receptive to public journalism than were executives and reporters. Bender and Berens wrote:

If the majority or even a strong plurality of journalists agrees with the tenets of public journalism as we operationalize them in this study, what are we arguing about? Perhaps the problem is not so much one of differing ideologies as of simple misunderstanding. Perhaps we are not so much working at cross-purposes as simply speaking in different dialects.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> James R. Bender and Charlyne Berens, "Public Journalism's Incubator: Identifying Preconditions for Support," presented at Public Journalism: A Critical Forum, conference at the University of South Carolina, 11-13 October 1998.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

In a 1998 master's thesis at the University of Western Ontario, Delaney Lyle Turner compared the penny press and public journalism. *From Classes to Masses: A Comparative Study of the Penny Press and Public Journalism* was a work involving literature review and telephone interviews in which Turner researched the origins, as well as the goals, of both periods of journalism. Political, social, economic, and technological factors of both the penny press and public journalism were examined with an eye toward comparison. Delaney's stated intent was to show there are direct parallels between the penny press and public journalism, the most important parallel being in the journalist's responsibility to democracy. He concluded his research confirmed the parallels, particularly in the aforementioned commitment to democracy.<sup>48</sup>

University of South Carolina Ph.D. student Rebecca A. Payne contended that public journalism has evolved enough to be considered in a second stage of development. No longer are public journalists involved solely in generating reporting projects that can be called "public journalism."

---

<sup>48</sup> Delaney Lyle Turner, "From Classes to Masses: A Comparative Study of the Penny Press and Public Journalism" (Master's Thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1998).



They are now attempting to improve daily journalism and originating projects that are intended to do what public journalism was supposed to do all along: improve citizen participation in public life.

Payne's dissertation is a case study of the public journalism efforts of the Columbia, South Carolina, State newspaper to improve its connection with its readers. "Project Reconnect," another venture sponsored by the Pew Center for Civic Journalism, asked readers how daily news coverage could be improved. The readers targeted were those who reported that religion affected their daily decisions. The Knight-Ridder Corporation also provided funding for Project Reconnect. Knight-Ridder is the State's parent company.

Payne utilized a reader focus group as well as data collected by the State and a questionnaire filled out by State reporters and editors to determine their opinions of Project Reconnect and public journalism. There was also an analysis of contents of the State to determine if the paper was practicing public journalism.

Payne concluded that public journalism done poorly could harm, not heal, newspaper relationships with readers; that reporter involvement and clearly defined goals and a method

for measuring the results of public journalism projects are critical to the success of second-stage public journalism; and, concluded Payne, public journalists must avoid even the appearance of pandering to their readers.<sup>49</sup>

Susan Willey acknowledged the similar aims of the Hutchins Commission and public journalists in a series of case studies of public journalism projects. Willey wrote: "Civic, or public journalists at some newspapers are attempting to bridge [the] journalist-citizen communication gap by using a variety of creative methods to systematically listen to citizens--to talk with rather than talk at the people."<sup>50</sup> Willey examined the work of four newspapers. All four papers made an effort to give readers more of a voice in determining how news was covered.

It was Willey's conclusion that journalists' efforts to listen to their readers serve as a catalyst for both

---

<sup>49</sup> Rebecca A. Payne, "Connecting in Columbia, South Carolina: A Case Study in Public Journalism" (Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina, 1998). Several of the works cited in this section were presented at this same conference. This was one of the few sources of works by academics on community journalism. Most writing on the subject is partisan opinion, some of which is included later in this chapter.

<sup>50</sup> Susan Willey, "Civic Journalism in Practice: Case Studies in the Art of Listening," *Newspaper Research Journal*, 19 (Winter 1998): 16.

knowledge and discussion and that journalists are finding ways to use reader input in the news reporting process. "In effect, these journalists seem to be creating new paradigms for newsgathering, using a citizen-based informational foundation."<sup>51</sup>

In 1996, James Robert Compton, in a think piece, reported on the theoretical foundations for public journalism, examining the communicative theories of American pragmatist John Dewey and German thinker Jurgen Habermas. Compton wrote that public journalism is an attempt to put Habermas's vision of discursive politics into practice. However, asserted Compton, "the proponents of public journalism fail to provide a critique of public life that is informed by the historical, political and economic context of the media industry." What Compton seemed to be saying is that public journalists fail to consider real-world conditions within the media and society as they attempt to bring the public back into public life.<sup>52</sup>

Tanni Haas has also examined the influence of Habermas and others who have taken similar approaches to public

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> James Robert Compton, "Communicative Politics and Public Journalism" (Master's thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1996).

discourse. Haas noted in 1996: "Little attention has been focused on the kind of publicness [a word used frequently by community journalists] that the news media ought to further." The choice, according to Haas, using the works of Habermas and Harvard political theory professor, Seyla Benhabib, in particular as reference, is between public journalism and a journalism of publics.<sup>53</sup> Public journalism considers individual members of society to be part of the whole; society is considered to have come first. Therefore, the interests of the individual are secondary to that of society. A journalism of publics, on the other hand, considers individuals primary, with society developing from those individuals or groups of individuals. In approaching journalism, a journalism of publics allows investigators, or reporters, to explore the underlying values of individuals' opinions.

---

<sup>53</sup> See Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press,) 1990; *Justification and Application* (Cambridge: MIT Press,) 1993; *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (Cambridge: MIT Press), 1990; and Seyla Benhabib, "Afterword: Communicative Ethics and Contemporary Controversies in Practical Philosophy," in S. Benhabib and F. Dallmayr (eds.), *The Communicative Ethics Controversy* (Cambridge: MIT Press,) 330-369; Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self* (New York: Routledge), 1992.

It was Haas's conclusion that the argument over what the press is supposed to do, as waged several decades ago by Dewey and Lippmann, is continuing and is resulting in a "crisis of civic communication." Civic journalism is faced with its own argument: public journalism or a journalism of publics.<sup>54</sup>

In a think piece drawing on theories of philosophy, David K. Perry viewed the civic journalism debate as a conversation between nominalists and realists.<sup>55</sup> There are elements of both in the civic journalism movement. It is possible, wrote Perry, for civic journalism to adopt either a purely nominalist approach or a purely realist approach. It is also possible to adopt a combination of the two, which Perry said is more realistic. In approaching the practice of civic journalism, its practitioners should, according to Perry, adopt not only the "I" of nominalism, but also the "me" of realism. In this way, civic journalists can be both

---

<sup>54</sup> Tanni Haas, "Towards a Democratically Viable Conception of Publicness: The Case of Public Journalism," presented at Public Journalism: A Critical Forum, conference at the University of South Carolina, 11-13 October 1998.

<sup>55</sup> Nominalists theorize that universals exist only in the mind. Realists theorize that universals exist independent of thought or perception.

commentators on and participants in the society they write about.

One duty of journalists to be considered is the duty to the broader world at large, as opposed to the specific community in which the journalist operates. Wrote Perry:

[C]ivic journalists perhaps should emphasize the welfare of the entire human race, as well as that of their local community. . . . This would seem to fall closer to the midpoint of the hypothesized nominalism-realism scale than does one that considers the interests of only a specified community or of only the entire human race."<sup>56</sup>

In *Local Television News and Viewer Empowerment: TV Journalism's Role in Empowering an Informed and Active Public*, Denise Barkis Richter advanced her theory that it is newsroom attitudes that hamstring the public journalism effort. Richter conducted a content analysis of 194 local television news stories and found that only four of them contained "empowering information." She defined empowering information as information that not only allows viewers to take steps to correct an undesirable situation, but also gives them

---

<sup>56</sup> David K. Perry, "Civic Journalism, Nominalism and Realism," presented at Public Journalism: A Critical Forum, conference at the University of South Carolina, 11-13 October 1998.

information, such as phone numbers and addresses, needed to reach those who are in position to bring about changes.<sup>57</sup>

Richter conducted in-depth interviews with fifteen local television news workers (reporters, writers, and producers) and found there were three primary reasons empowering information was left out of local newscasts: (1) Employers showed no commitment to including such information in news stories. (2) News workers themselves showed no enterprise in gathering and disseminating such information, relying instead on "spot news" stories. (3) News workers perceived that viewers did not want such information, that viewers were more interested in human-interest stories than in stories of wider importance.<sup>58</sup>

Richter recommended that television stations devote the same resources to developing empowering information as is now devoted to such viewer attractive features as the weather report, that television stations "adopt empowering information as their overarching philosophy," that reporters

---

<sup>57</sup> Denise Barkis Richter, "Local Television News and Viewer Empowerment: TV Journalism's Role in Empowering an Informed and Active Public," presented at Public Journalism: A Critical Forum, conference at the University of South Carolina, 11-13 October 1998.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

be given the time and resources to develop stories involving empowering information, and that television stations stop underestimating the needs of their viewers. Without these steps, warned, Richards, "Television news will not live up to its full potential."<sup>59</sup>

Scott Maier used content analysis to study public journalism on television in eighteen U.S. markets during the 1996 elections. Maier asked: "In short, did television broadcasters pledged to public journalism deliver their promised reform?" Maier also compared his results to those of a previous study of public journalism at newspapers in twenty markets during the same election season. Deborah Potter of the Poynter Institute in St. Petersburg, Florida, conducted that study. Researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill assisted Potter.<sup>60</sup>

Maier's reported results indicated that broadcasters were not as intent on providing public journalism as were the newspaper journalists studied by Potter. There was a slight

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Scott Maier and Deborah Potter, "Public Journalism Through the Television Lens: How Did The Broadcast Media Perform in Campaign '96?," presented at Public Journalism: A Critical Forum, conference at the University of South Carolina, 11-13 October 1998.



difference in coverage provided by the television public journalists when they were compared with nonpublic journalism television reporters, but it was statistically insignificant. Conversely, the public journalism newspapers in Potter's study had shown a substantial difference in content. Baier noted the results of his study demonstrate the strong resistance to public journalism in television newsrooms and an apparent difficulty in adapting television to public journalism because of the dependence on high-impact visuals and quick sound bites.<sup>61</sup>

Two groups of young people, a group of high school students and a group of undergraduate journalism students, were studied by Eleanor M. Novek to determine the attitudes of young news student/consumers and their reactions to civic journalism. Using a survey administered to both groups, Novek attempted to determine what the expectations of students were and how to employ civic journalism in delivering the news product young people want.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Eleanor M. Novek, "In the Public Interest?--NOT!" Young People Assess the Social Responsibility of the Press in Civic Journalism," presented at Public Journalism: A Critical Forum, conference at the University of South Carolina, 11-13 October 1998.

Novek found the high school students less accepting of the examples of civic journalism they were shown than were the college journalism students. The high school students, "evaluated civic journalism and its claims of social accountability and found them wanting." The high schoolers believed that the news coverage they were shown was "driven by economic concerns." The college students believed what they were shown demonstrated journalists' attempts to be more socially responsible.<sup>63</sup>

Novek concluded that young people are, contrary to some reports, ready to participate in a more engaged relationship with the media, as long as the media conduct themselves in a socially responsive manner. Novek expressed an expectation that young audiences will demand ethical, socially responsible news coverage that encourages democratic participation and, in so doing, "will be able to make their voices heard in the public sphere."<sup>64</sup>

Working with the School of Communication at Webster University, Don Corrigan conducted a mail survey of newspaper editors and journalism professors in late 1996. Corrigan was

---

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

trying to determine what constitutes a public journalism project. Six projects were outlined for the respondents, who were asked if each project was a genuine public journalism effort and whether they supported such projects.

With the exception of only one project, Corrigan found little agreement on what the term "public journalism" means. Only projects getting voters involved in discussions of the issues in political races were thought to be true public journalism projects by the respondents. The program used as an example by Corrigan was the "Voice of the Voter" campaign a 1994 *San Francisco Chronicle*, KRON-TV and KQED-FM experiment.

Corrigan concluded that the differences of opinion over what a public journalism project is has led to the so-called "definition problem" of public journalism. That, in turn, allows critics of public journalism to "fire at will," defining what form the target will take. In addition, wrote Corrigan, public journalists are working without a blueprint, inventing the phenomenon as they go; if they don't soon address the definition problem, public journalism will have no future.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Don Corrigan. "Racial Pledges, Gang Summits, Election Forums--What Actually Makes a Public Journalism Project?" *St. Louis Journalism Review* 27 (March 1997): 1.

James Englehardt, a graduate student at the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and Communication, presented a think piece based on the writings of community journalism advocates and critics at the University of South Carolina Community Journalism Forum. Englehardt refuted the accepted ideas of both the public journalists and the critics of public journalism. Both, he has said, are off-target. Englehardt noted in 1998, as did Haas, mentioned above, that the public journalism debate is a renewal of the Dewey/Lippmann debate. Perhaps the greatest weakness of public journalism, according to Englehardt, is that "it remains ill-defined," with no consensus even on whether it should be called public journalism, civic journalism, communitarian journalism, or one of the other names assigned to it at various times by various practitioners. The public journalists, wrote Englehardt, make some false assumptions, the foremost being that journalism is suffering because of a loss of public trust in public life. Public journalism critics also make false assumptions, he said, the foremost being that public journalism sounds the death-knell for objectivity.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup> James Englehardt, "Public Journalism, Objectivity and Public Life," presented at Public Journalism: A Critical

Englehardt concluded that public journalists cannot escape the problem of lacking a true definition of what public journalism is by simply claiming that experiments cannot be defined. Conversely, it is unfair for critics of public journalism to "expect a concise definition of public journalism." One way to solve the problem, according to Englehardt, is for public journalists to hold the kind of forums they encourage the public to engage in, only the conversation would not concern government and public life; it would revolve around a definition for public journalism. Wrote Englehardt, "These are deeper issues that journalists need to confront before throwing more time and money into the practical implementations of public journalism."<sup>67</sup>

Beyond a Proper Literature Review:  
Partisan Viewpoints

The works cited above in the community journalism literature review are all scholarly attempts to define, analyze, and explain community journalism. The authors of those works must inevitably refer to the partisans in the community journalism debate. Therefore, at least a sampling

---

Forum, conference at the University of South Carolina, 11-13 October 1998.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

of the works of those partisans is necessary to this section. What follows is a sampling of the writings of not only the proponents of community journalism but also the writings of those who see community journalism as a threat, or at least a nuisance, for journalism.

Ed Lambeth, Philip Meyer, and Esther Thorsen's *Assessing Public Journalism* is an attempt to analyze several aspects of public journalism.<sup>68</sup> Most of the chapters, written by public journalism scholars, are pro-public journalism. Lambeth, Meyer, and Thorsen have all written chapters. Jennie Buckner of the *Charlotte Observer* has contributed her views of public journalism in the 1996 elections. Her pro-public journalism view is refuted by editor/owner of the *Ames (Iowa) Tribune*, Michael Gartner. Gartner, onetime head of NBC News, is a strong critic of public journalism. Davis Merritt and Jay Rosen have co-written a chapter. Merritt, who, through the year 2000, was spending most of his time promoting public journalism and was no longer concerned with day-to-day operations of the *Wichita Eagle*, and Rosen, a professor from New York University, were the two most enthusiastic supporters of "public journalism." Rick Thames, who had

---

<sup>68</sup> Where possible, without causing confusion, the author uses the terms used by the practitioners.

assumed Merritt's old job of editor at the *Wichita Eagle*, discussed the effects of public journalism on the 1992 elections. There are also chapters on how to make advocates out of public journalism doubters and on the changes in daily news coverage public journalism brings to a newsroom.<sup>69</sup>

The community journalism "evangelist" from the journalism side of the discussion is Davis Merritt. In *Public Journalism and Public Life*, Merritt explained why he felt a change was needed in the way journalists do their jobs. Journalists had become too removed from the society they cover, according to Merritt. The old standard of objectivity was no longer useful. The traditional journalist, said Merritt, attempts to stay uninvolved in the stories he or she covers. The public journalist tries to get as involved as possible. Merritt made the point throughout that if journalism does not do the job right, and by that he meant getting connected with the community, journalists will become excess baggage in society, and society will no longer need or utilize them. A symbiotic relationship is what is called for, in Merritt's view. Symbiosis is "two dissimilar

---

<sup>69</sup> Edmund B. Lambeth, Philip E. Meyer and Esther Thorson, *Assessing Public Journalism* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998).

organisms living in a mutually beneficial relationship, each bringing something essential to the whole."<sup>70</sup> The "two dissimilar organisms" are the press and politicians. When this symbiotic relationship cannot be sustained neither can democracy. In Merritt's view, as well as in the view of many other public journalists, it is the loss of interest in the democratic process that has led to a loss of interest in reading newspapers and watching television news. Merritt claimed the way to restore a healthy press is to restore a healthy democracy.

The community journalism "evangelist" from academe is Jay Rosen, a journalism professor at New York University. Rosen and Merritt frequently appear together at public journalism conferences, often going their own way for a few days or a few weeks at a time, only to meet up again at another public journalism conference or forum. They preach the same message from different disciplines (one is an academic, the other a member of the working press), but in similar thoughts and words.<sup>71</sup> In *Community Connectedness*,

---

<sup>70</sup> Davis Merritt, *Public Journalism and Public Life* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998), 52.

<sup>71</sup> Mike Hoyt, "Are You Now, or Will You Ever Be, A Civic Journalist," *Columbia Journalism Review* (September/October 1995): 27-33.



Rosen told his readers that the job of a free press is to enhance democracy. Rosen devoted a part of his article to the comments of the late James K. Batten, chief executive of Knight Ridder, Inc. A Batten article was also included in *Connectedness*. Batten wrote that it is incumbent upon the press to be connected to the society it covers; it is incumbent upon society to be an "active, engaged citizenry, willing to join in public debate and participate in public affairs."<sup>72</sup> In Batten's opinion, it is the job of the press to convince the citizenry that being "active" and "engaged" is necessary. If citizens do not feel they are part of a community, and many of them do not, said Batten, they feel no connectedness; they feel no reason to read about the factors affecting the community. That is where public journalism must be employed to make citizens care, to make them feel connected, and, therefore, to make them want to read about their community and see it reflected on the nightly TV newscast. Batten wrote that press executives, reporters, and editors were coming to agreement that there was a need for newspapers to be more involved in their communities. Batten summed up his views this way: "You can audit your

---

<sup>72</sup> Jay Rosen, *Community Connectedness: Passwords for Public Journalism*, *The Poynter Papers*: No. 3 (St. Petersburg, FL: The Poynter Institute for Media Studies, 1993) 3.

communities, but it needs to be done in sort of a motherly fashion. A newspaper should not be afraid to put its arms around a community and say, "I love you."<sup>73</sup>

*Mixed News: The Public/Civic/Communitarianism Debate*,<sup>74</sup> edited by Jay Black, holder of the Poynter-Jamison chair of mass media ethics at the University of South Florida-St. Petersburg, is a consideration of community journalism from the point of view of several ethicists, as well as from the point of view of a trio of journalism's veterans. There are both pro and con views in *Mixed News*, some of them the product of presentations made by the book's contributors at a 1994 gathering at the University of South Florida's St. Petersburg campus; some of them articles submitted for this publication. Ralph Barney, a professor of communications at Brigham Young University, and John Merrill, professor emeritus at the University of Missouri-Columbia journalism school, two of journalism's most respected ethical thinkers, have both been critical of community journalism, as have the University of Montana's Deni Elliot and the Freedom Forum's

---

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>74</sup> Jay Black (ed.) *Mixed News: The Public/Civic/Communitarianism Debate* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997).

Paul McMasters. McMasters has offered eight cautions for practitioners of public journalism. Among them is the warning: "There will be opportunists who hijack it for a joy ride, publishers who use it as a marketing tool, editors who cite it to justify neglect of more traditional reporting, and reporters who go along with it to get ahead."<sup>75</sup> There has also been enthusiastic support for community journalism. J. Herbert Altschull, professor in The Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University, told his readers that journalism is going through a crisis of conscience. Noting that he had previously written of community journalism, but called it "participatory journalism," Altschull wrote in 1997 that he saw a critical role in community journalism for the electronic media. Particularly important in the community journalism movement, in Altschull's view, was talk-radio.<sup>76</sup>

A 1995 joint publication of the Pew Center for Civic Journalism and the Poynter Institute limns six of the public journalism efforts that are considered seminal. *Civic Journalism: Six Case Studies*, outlines partnerships between newspapers, television stations, radio stations and, in one

---

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 191.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 141.

case, a public relations firm.<sup>77</sup> Among the six cases was the partnership in Charlotte, North Carolina, in which WPEG-AM, WBAV-FM, WSOC-TV, and the Charlotte Observer combined for a project called "Taking Back Our Neighborhoods."

The ambush killing of two Charlotte police officers had inspired "Neighborhoods." It was an attempt to get citizens involved in cleaning up crime in their own neighborhoods, an effort led by the media organizations. A six-month project stretched into two years. The Observer and WSOC-TV won awards. Assessments of the effect on crime in Charlotte were inconclusive. In Wisconsin, a joint community journalism effort, which included a public relations firm, attempted to arouse citizen interest in the political process in the Madison area. In Tallahassee, Florida, "The Public Agenda" was also an attempt to increase community involvement in community issues. There were descriptions of similar efforts in Boston, San Francisco, and Seattle. *Six Case Studies* concluded:

Our nation's civic life is in disrepair and the implications for journalism are ominous: Citizens who don't participate in the life of their community have little need for news. Civic journalism seeks to address

---

<sup>77</sup> Jan Schaffer and Edward D. Miller (eds.) *Civic Journalism: Six Case Studies* Washington, DC: Pew Center for Civic Journalism, 1995).

some of this detachment and improve journalism in a way that may help stimulate civic discourse.<sup>78</sup>

### Social Responsibility Theory

Many community journalists are either ostensibly or genuinely motivated in part by belief in the social responsibility of the press. For this reason, *Four Theories of the Press* is a mandatory inclusion in a literature review of community journalism. The social responsibility theory is one of the four theories explored in *Four Theories* and the Hutchins Commission is referred to several times. Generally, social responsibility theory holds that the press has not made responsible use of its favored position in United States society. Social responsibility theory calls for the press to service the political system, safeguard the liberties of the individual, and enlighten the public.<sup>79</sup>

### Works on Brechner, Davis, and Renick

Very little has been written on Joe Brechner; the only writing about Norm Davis is contained in cursory mention about the work of WJXT-TV. More work has been done on Ralph Renick. The Wolfson Archive at the Miami-Dade Public Library contains a wealth of material on Renick, much of it primary

---

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 1.

information, but also an appreciable amount of secondary information.

Ralph Renick has been the subject of two doctoral dissertations. Gerald Flannery's 1966 dissertation at Ohio University was a study of the content of Renick's editorials, an attempt to go beyond national studies that had counted the number of stations doing editorials and local studies that had dealt only with specific editorial campaigns.<sup>80</sup> Flannery worked with Renick as a news editor from 1958-1961 and was familiar with newsroom procedures at WTVJ. He used his contacts at the station to gain access to the files of editorials for the period involved in his study, 2 September 1957 through 2 September 1965. Each of 1,735 editorials "was read, coded, and recorded in terms of subject matter, use of verbal supporting material, type of editorials, visual materials used, individual position of the editorialist, and effect of the editorial."<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> Theodore Peterson, "The Social Responsibility Theory of the Press," in *Four Theories of the Press*, ed. Fred S. Siebert (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956), 74.

<sup>80</sup> Gerald Vincent Flannery, "Local Television Editorializing: A Case Study of the Editorials of Ralph Renick on WTVJ-TV" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio University, 1966), 6.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

Flannery found that the majority of Renick editorials were offshoots of news stories, that Renick tried to persuade his viewers on the issues of the time and that the newscaster believed editorials were more effective if delivered by someone involved in the news, such as the news anchor.<sup>82</sup> Flannery used his research to formulate guidelines for television editorializing, concluding that the Renick method was effective and should be emulated by other broadcasters.<sup>83</sup>

Editorial crusades by television stations, specifically WTVJ, was the subject of Paul Ashdown's 1975 doctoral dissertation at Bowling Green State University.<sup>84</sup> Ashdown also used content analysis but was interested primarily in the editorials that fell into the crusade category. Two crusades were identified. During 1966, WTVJ broadcast seventy-three editorials, sixty-five of them consecutively, decrying the lack of adequate law enforcement in the Miami area.<sup>85</sup> The crusade was picked up by Miami newspaper and

---

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 75-77.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 96-99.

<sup>84</sup> Paul Ashdown, "Television and the Editorial Crusade: A Case Study of WTVJ-TV, 1965-1973" (Ph.D. diss., Bowling Green State University, 1975).

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 106.

radio outlets and drew national attention. Public officials were indicted. Voters decided to change the system of selecting the sheriff.

Another crusade centered on restaurant cleanliness in the Miami area.<sup>86</sup> The 1973 restaurant editorials resulted in passage of an ordinance to give government additional power to enforce sanitation laws in Miami restaurants. The restaurant editorials may not appear at first to fit the pattern of editorializing on important social issues but are, nonetheless, useful because they illustrate the communitarian approach of the three broadcasters around which the present study revolves. Although the issue of restaurant cleanliness was a consumer issue, there were still elements of putting the interest of the community first even at the risk of economic well being and personal safety.

S.L. Alexander's 1992 article in *Mass Comm Review* is more biographical than analytical. "May the Good News Be Yours: Ralph Renick and Florida's First News" is a combination of source and popular biography.<sup>87</sup> Alexander is

---

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>87</sup> S.L. Alexander, "May the Good News Be Yours: Ralph Renick and Florida's First News" *Mass Comm Review* 19, 1-2 (Winter-Spring 1992): 57-63.



clearly from the "great man" school of history, presenting Renick as a pioneer in South Florida television, subject to occasional criticism he did not deserve. Alexander describes Renick's career from the night he anchored his first newscast on WTVJ in July 1950 to his death in July 1991. In the intervening years he had become, in *Nightline* anchor Ted Koppel's words, quoted in the Alexander article, "a national institution in a local television market."

There is also much material on Renick and WTVJ to be found in newspapers such as the *Miami Herald*, the *Miami News*, the *Fort Lauderdale News*, the *Miami Beach Daily Sun Reporter* and others. Renick was a popular topic for Miami's print media and articles regarding his editorials appeared frequently.

Richard Martin mentions Norm Davis briefly in two works. Martin was the Jacksonville *Times-Union* reporter assigned to cover efforts to consolidate city and county government in the Jacksonville area.<sup>88</sup> In *The City Makers*, Martin said he not only worked for the newspaper, but also had been "brought in" by the Consolidation Study Commission to promote

---

<sup>88</sup> Richard A. Martin, *The City Makers* (Jacksonville: Convention Press, Inc. 1972). Richard A. Martin, *Consolidation: Jacksonville, Duval County* (Jacksonville: Convention Press, Inc., 1968).

consolidation. The retired reporter and Jacksonville historian gave himself much of the credit for the consolidation success, but did complement WJXT-TV's efforts in the consolidation movement.

Although there was frequent mention of Joe Brechner in Orlando newspapers during the 1960s, only two researchers have included him in their work. Kathy Amick Fuqua-Cardwell wrote briefly of Brechner in her 1992 master's thesis at Rollins College.<sup>89</sup> Fuqua-Cardwell looked at questions asked by Plato: What is Justice? What kind of state would be most just? As she considered Socrates' conclusion that justice involves balancing three elements of being: the rational, the spirited and the appetite, Fuqua-Cardwell examined Central Florida, as a representative of American society, through this lens. It is the inclusion of everyone at the table, as Octavio Paz has noted, that constitutes justice. That was something that was not being done in Central Florida, according to Fuqua-Cardwell. She illustrated her point with an outline of racial history in the state, beginning in the 1920s and continuing through 1970.

---

<sup>89</sup> Kathy Amick Fuqua-Cardwell, "Racial Justice: Orange County 1920-1970" (Master's thesis, Rollins College, Winter Park, FL, 1992).

The tumultuous sixties are a major part of Fuqua-Cardwell's thesis. The fight for civil rights is the focal point and the part played by Joe Brechner and others who were active in Orlando's Civil Rights Movement is explored. Fuqua-Cardwell concluded that Brechner was particularly successful in "making the invisible visible" at a time when the publisher of the *Orlando Sentinel* had, according to one reporter, told his staff that civil rights was a taboo subject because "[I]f an incident was not reported, it didn't happen."<sup>90</sup> Although *Sentinel* publisher Martin Anderson kept a lid on civil rights news, Fuqua-Cardwell wrote that Brechner used his television station for a full discussion of the issues.

A Linda Perry article in the 1997 compilation of research on television history, *Television in America*, examined Brechner's contribution to the Civil Rights Movement in Orlando and traced the history of WFTV through 1969. This article by the assistant professor of communications at Purdue University was the inspiration for the Brechner segment of the present work. "A TV Pioneer's Crusade for Civil Rights in the Segregated South" is a broad look at

---

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 101.

WFTV-TV and Joe Brechner's stewardship of the station.<sup>91</sup>

Perry called Brechner and WFTV-TV "a voice in the wilderness" in 1960s Orlando and "a safety valve for a simmering conflict." When Brechner was removed from active management of WFTV in a legal battle with the Federal Communications Commission, concluded Perry, "a voice of reason over the airwaves was silenced."<sup>92</sup> The present study attempts to narrow the focus, to analyze the themes and strategies in the editorials, and to determine if Joe Brechner's editorials contributed to the less turbulent racial atmosphere in Orlando compared to other cities of the South.

Although there is a great deal of literature on community journalism, most of it is opinion by either the practitioners of this kind of journalism or their critics. There is some academic work on the subject, however. Most of that academic work centers on newspapers or the philosophical underpinnings of the movement. Several of the citations in

---

<sup>91</sup> Linda Perry, "A TV Pioneer's Crusade for Civil Rights in the Segregated South: WFTV, Orlando, Florida," in *Television in America: Local Station History from Across the Nation*, eds. Michael D. Murray and Donald G. Godfrey (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1997).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 154.

this section are works first presented at a 1998 community journalism conference at the University of South Carolina.

There is little secondary source material on Joe Brechner, although Kathy Amick Fuqua-Cardwell briefly mentions him in her 1992 master's thesis. He is also the subject of a chapter in a 1997 history of broadcasting in America. There is even less on Norm Davis, who was mentioned only occasionally in articles on WJXT-TV. There is more on Ralph Renick, who has been the subject of two doctoral dissertations and many articles in magazines, newspapers, and books.

CHAPTER 3  
THE HUTCHINS COMMISSION: A FOUNDATION FOR  
COMMUNITY JOURNALISM

This chapter reviews the work and conclusions of the Hutchins Commission, which was financed in the 1940s by Henry Luce, chairman of Time, Inc., to look into some of the problems that plagued the press of Luce's day.<sup>93</sup> First, the origin, structure, and operation of the commission are explained. Then the commission's recommendations are inventoried. Finally, reaction from the press, which was the subject of the commission's study, is reviewed.

Examination of the work of the Hutchins Commission and the motivations behind formation of the commission bear direct correlation to the efforts of community journalists. There are many similarities between complaints that were being made against the press of the 1940s and complaints against the 1990s press. There are also similarities in the

---

<sup>93</sup> M.A. Blanchard, "The Hutchins Commission, the Press and the Responsibility Concept," *Journalism Monographs* (May 1997): 11.

solutions offered by the Hutchins Commission and solutions offered by proponents of community journalism.

There were complaints that the press was being taken over by a few powerful owners, and, as a result, the common citizen was being squeezed out, was being denied a voice in the great cacophony of voices that was supposed to result in the American melody. The complaints were important to Luce because of his own concerns about preserving newsgathering capabilities of the press, capabilities he thought vital to the survival of a free society.<sup>94</sup> There was also the perception that the press was concentrating on the sensational, on stories and events that would sell papers and increase broadcast audiences.<sup>95</sup> These are all problems voiced by critics of the press in the year 2000. Community journalism appears, in many ways, to echo Hutchins Commission recommendations.

#### The Commission Is Formed

The commission was composed of thirteen members, all chosen by University of Chicago president Robert M. Hutchins,

---

<sup>94</sup> J.S. McIntyre, "Repositioning a Landmark: The Hutchins Commission and Freedom of the Press," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 4 (1987): 136-160.

<sup>95</sup> Blanchard, *Hutchins*, 26.

most of them respected in the field of advanced education but with no direct experience in the press, although several of them had experience in dealing with the press.<sup>96</sup> Luce had chosen Hutchins because of Hutchins' reputation as a thoughtful press critic. Time, Inc., contributed \$200,000 in financing. Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. contributed \$15,000. The money was disbursed through the University of Chicago, giving neither Time nor Encyclopaedia Britannica control over or assumed responsibility for the study.

Commission members heard testimony from fifty-eight men and women connected with the press. Robert Hutchins wrote in a foreword to the report that "[b]ecause of the present world crisis," commission members had limited their study to "the role of the agencies of mass communication in the education of the people in public affairs." Staff members conducted recorded interviews with more than 225 additional witnesses from industry, government, and private agencies concerned with the press. Staff and committee members prepared 176 documents for commission members to study. The commission held seventeen two-day or three-day meetings.<sup>97</sup> Their

---

<sup>96</sup> McIntyre, *Repositioning*, 138-139.

<sup>97</sup> The Hutchins Commission, *A Free and Responsible Press* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1947), v-vi.



conclusions were put together by staff members, then perused line-by-line by each member before the report was assembled as a 137-page book and released on 26 March 1947.<sup>98</sup>

Chairman Robert Hutchins was an innovator at the University of Chicago, where he was president. Hutchins had a reputation for being critical of the press. He had chastised the press for not meeting society's needs and had done it from the podium at a gathering of the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE).<sup>99</sup>

Others on the commission included Zechariah Chafee, Jr., of Harvard, the leading scholar of the time on the free speech provision of the First Amendment and the author of *Free Speech in the United States*. John Clark had dealt with the press in his several jobs in the Roosevelt administration, including the position of consultant to the National Recovery Administration and had also written the final analysis on the NRA. Harold Laswell was director of war communications research for the Library of Congress. Several years later Laswell wrote the definition of

---

<sup>98</sup> Blanchard, *Hutchins*, 24; Commission on Freedom of the Press, *A Free and Responsible Press: A General Report on Mass Communication: Newspapers, Radio, Motion Pictures, Magazines, and Books* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1947).

<sup>99</sup> Blanchard, *Hutchins*, 12.

communication that has had such staying power: "Who says what in which channel to whom with what effect."<sup>100</sup> Poet Archibald MacLeish was the Librarian of Congress and felt that the press played an important role in the international relations of a country. Robert Niebuhr, a professor of ethics at Union Theological Seminary, had authored several articles on ethics and morality. Beardsley Ruml had worked for government, devising the pay-as-you-go income tax system for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and had come in frequent contact with journalists. He said he liked journalists but had realized, "They can do amazing things even to a hand-out, unless you sit down with them and go over what you want to say paragraph by paragraph."<sup>101</sup>

Luce and Hutchins had considered including members of the press on the commission. They discussed inviting columnist Walter Lippmann, advertising executive Chester Bowles, and Federal Communications Commission Chairman Lawrence Fly to participate. They decided, however, that putting media representatives on the commission might limit

---

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 15.

the commission's independence. Those same media representatives were later asked to testify.<sup>102</sup>

### Press Reaction

In advance of the commission's work, there was mixed reaction from members of the press to the very fact that such a commission had been formed. Some of the press, which in the view of the commission included movies, newspapers, magazines and radio, claimed to welcome such an undertaking, claimed to be eager for suggestions on how to improve, and even thought that the commission would be an ally in preserving First Amendment press rights. For instance, an *Editor & Publisher* editorial said, "*Editor & Publisher* believes that the vigilance necessary to preserve the First Amendment as the keystone of all democratic freedoms" would be served by the work of the commission.<sup>103</sup> According to Blanchard, other members of the press slipped into paranoia in the fear that the work of such a commission could lead to press censorship and government control.<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>102</sup> McIntyre, *Repositioning*, 139.

<sup>103</sup> "Research on Freedom," *Editor and Publisher*, 4 March 1966. 32.

<sup>104</sup> Blanchard, *Hutchins*, 4.

Even those who had lauded the idea of the commission in the beginning changed their minds once they saw the report or heard about it from other members of the press. For instance, the *Chicago Tribune's* headline read, "A Free Press (Hitler Style) Sought for U.S."<sup>105</sup> Frank Hughes, who had written the *Tribune's* story, in a book published three years later attacked not only the report, but individual commission members as well, calling Hutchins' philosophies fascist and noting that Hutchins had held membership in groups with Communist connections. Hughes wrote in his preface:

Early in the research, I discovered that I would have to do what this so-called "commission," created by Chancellor Robert M. Hutchins of the University of Chicago and numbering some of the most prominent professors in the higher learning in its company, did not do--search for the truth. The study and research which this entailed resulted in a reexamination of modern political philosophy, as well as a gathering and examination of the facts concerning the American newspaper press today, which were available to the "Commission on Freedom of the Press," but which it did not choose to examine.<sup>106</sup>

On the other hand, a few papers did find merit in the report. Philip Graham's *Washington Post* was among them. Graham's newspaper said several of the commission's

---

<sup>105</sup> Frank Hughes, "The Professors and the Press," *Chicago Tribune*, 27 April 1947, 22F.

<sup>106</sup> Frank Hughes, *Prejudice and the Press* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1950), v.

recommendations had merit, and its premise that a responsible press is necessary to freedom was well founded. The Louisville Courier-Journal even said the report had not gone far enough.<sup>107</sup>

Members of the media who had expressed fears about what *A Free and Responsible Press* might contain felt they had been vindicated when they saw the report. Statements that seemed highly critical of the way the press was doing its job only exacerbated press paranoia. One example:

The modern press itself is a new phenomenon. Its typical unit is the great agency of mass communication. These agencies can facilitate thought and discussion. They can stifle it. They can advance the progress of civilization or they can thwart it. They can debase and vulgarize mankind. They can endanger the peace of the world; they can do so accidentally, in a fit of absence of mind. They can play up or down the news and its significance, foster and feed emotions, create complacent fictions and blind spots, misuse the great worlds, and uphold empty slogans. Their scope and power are increasing every day as new instruments become available to them. These instruments can spread lies faster and farther than our forefathers dreamed when they enshrined the freedom of the press in the First Amendment to our Constitution.<sup>108</sup>

That statement is indicative of much of the tone of the Hutchins Commission report, yet there are segments of the report that indicate a willingness to let the press monitor

---

<sup>107</sup> Blanchard, *Hutchins*, 45.

<sup>108</sup> Hutchins Commission, 3.

itself. In an observation that appeared to have been taken directly from John Stuart Mill, the report said:

It (society) must guarantee freedom of expression, to the end that all adventitious hindrances to the flow of ideas shall be removed. Moreover, a significant innovation in the realm of ideas is likely to arouse resistance. Valuable ideas may be put forth first in forms that are crude, indefensible, or even dangerous. They need the chance to develop through free criticism as well as the chance to survive on the basis of their ultimate worth. Hence the man who publishes ideas requires special protection.<sup>109</sup>

Nonetheless, the report contained several statements that appeared to be thinly veiled threats that government was ready to step in to shape up the press. The commission said it was preferable for the press to control itself. In other words, to follow the commission's recommendations, but if the press wouldn't do it, the job would fall to government. The commission report said, "It becomes an imperative question whether the performance of the press can any longer be left the unregulated initiative of the few who manage it."<sup>110</sup>

Some of the commission's criticisms sound like they were taken from the 1990s. The report said news media were trying to attract the maximum audience by letting stories of night-club murders, race riots, strike violence, and quarrels among

---

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 16.

public officials crowd out the news of many of the activities that had a much deeper affect on the majority of U.S. media consumers. Newspaper columnists and radio commentators were particularly reproachable as they supplied to the public what amounted to "keyhole gossip, rumor, character assassination and lies."<sup>111</sup>

The commission had an apparent particular dislike for the trend toward ownership of more and more media outlets by fewer and fewer individuals, saying that not only were there economic forces at work, but personal forces. Commission members wrote, "These forces are those exaggerated drives for power and profit which have tended to restrict competition and to promote monopoly through the private enterprise system."<sup>112</sup> The real danger, thought commission members, was that those individuals were failing to allow opinions that disagreed with their own to reach the public.

#### Commission Goals

As it laid out thirteen steps to be taken by government, public, and press, the commission expressed the hope that its recommendations would lead to the achievement of "five ideal

---

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 48.

demands" or "requirements" that amounted to the commission's goals for the press. Those requirements were as follows:

1. A truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning;
2. A forum for the exchange of comment and criticism;
3. The projection of a representative picture of the constituent groups in society;
4. The presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society;
5. Full access to the day's intelligence.<sup>113</sup>

The thirteen steps in achieving these five goals placed equal responsibility on government, press, and public.

#### Recommendations to Government

It was to be the job of government to guide behaviors of the press but not to dictate those behaviors. The commission recommended the following:

1. That "constitutional guarantees of freedom of the press be recognized as including the radio and motion pictures."<sup>114</sup> This would not mean, however, that the FCC could not deny a license on the grounds that the applicant

---

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 21-29.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 82.



was unprepared to serve the public interest, convenience, and necessity, the commission said.

2. That the "government facilitate new ventures in the communications industry, that it foster the introduction of new techniques, that it maintain competition among large units through the antitrust laws, but that those laws be used sparingly to break up such units and that, where concentration is necessary in communications, the government endeavor to see to it that the public gets the benefit of such concentration."<sup>115</sup>

By that last phrase commission members meant that a network, for instance, should strive to take on affiliates even in the smallest market, although that market might not be large enough to be profitable. The commission stated that these measures could be achieved either by the industry acting responsibly, or by the government. Commission members made it clear that industry action was preferable, but the threat of government action was implicit. There is no indication why this recommendation was placed in the government section, rather than in the press section.

---

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 83.

3. That "as an alternative to existing remedies for libel, legislation by which the injured party might obtain a retraction or restatement of the facts by the offender or an opportunity for the offended to reply."<sup>116</sup>

4. "[T]he repeal of legislation prohibiting expressions in favor of revolutionary changes in U.S. institutions where there is no clear and present danger that violence will result from the expressions." The commission referred to the Alien Registration Act of 1940, the Smith Act, which made it a crime to advocate the violent overthrow of the Government or to belong to an organization that did.

5. "[T]hat the government, through the media of mass communication, inform the public of the facts with respect to its policies and of the purposes underlying those policies and that, to the extent that private agencies of mass communication are unable or unwilling to supply such media to the government, the government itself may employ media of its own."<sup>117</sup> This media use by the government also was to extend to disseminating information about the U.S. government in other countries.

---

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 88.

Recommendations to the Press

The commission expressed the hope that the press would take these measures so government would not be forced to act. It made five recommendations on self-governing measures to the press.

1. All "agencies of mass communication should accept the responsibilities of common carriers of information and discussion" and should present ideas other than their own.<sup>118</sup>

2. "Agencies of mass communication should assume the responsibility of financing new, experimental activities in their fields."<sup>119</sup> The commission said it was talking about things of high literary, artistic or intellectual activity, although commissioners did not say specifically what sorts of activities they had in mind.

3. The commission recommended "that the members of the press engage in vigorous mutual criticism."<sup>120</sup>

4. Commission members recommended "that the press use every means that" could "be devised to increase competence, independence and effectiveness of its staff."<sup>121</sup> Better pay,

---

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 94.

better contracts, better individual recognition were among those means.

5. Commission members advised "that the radio industry take control of its own industry" and treat advertising the way "the best newspapers" were treating advertisers.<sup>122</sup> That is, broadcasters should not continue to interweave commercial messages into their programs. They should clearly separate advertising and programming, similar to the way newspapers were separating advertising and news content. "The public should not be forced to continue to take its radio fare from the manufacturers of soap, cosmetics, cigarettes, soft drinks, and packaged foods."<sup>123</sup>

#### Recommendations to the Public

The report warned that members of the public had failed to realize that a communications revolution had occurred and did not appreciate "the tremendous power which the new instruments and the new organization place in the hands of a few men." Nor had the public come to realize how far the performance of the press fell short of the requirements of a free society. It was up to the public, said the commission,

---

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 95-96.

to hold the press accountable. There were three recommendations for the public.

1. The commission recommended "that nonprofit institutions help supply the variety, quantity and quality of press service required by the American people."<sup>124</sup> In other words, religious and educational organizations could make good documentary movies. It was necessary to do this immediately, rather than waiting for the schools to educate people going into the media to do it, because the world was "on the brink of suicide" and had to be educated without delay.

2. The commission also recommended "the creation of academic-professional centers of advanced study, research and publication in the field of communications," giving journalism students the broadest of educations.<sup>125</sup> The commission's remarks about journalism education were not complimentary; the commission had said journalism schools were doing little more than vocational training, and not a very good job of that.<sup>126</sup>

---

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 78.

3. The commission wanted a "new and independent agency" to report annually on the performance of the press.<sup>127</sup>

#### Citizens' Commission

The commission again and again came back to the idea of a citizens' commission to act as a watchdog on the press. It was this idea upon which success of all the other recommendations seemed to rest.<sup>128</sup> So much so that Hutchins at one point became so weary of hearing the recommendation that he said, "Does it at all disturb the commission that we seem to come back again and again to one recommendation only? Our single remedy for all ills is a continuing non-governmental commission; I cannot recall at the moment any other recommendation that the commission is prepared to make."<sup>129</sup>

Nonetheless, the recommendation was made and at the final discussion of organizing a citizens' commission, Chafee commented, "If the seed falls on fertile ground it will

---

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>128</sup> Hutchins Report, 100-102.

<sup>129</sup> Jerilyn S. McIntyre, "The Hutchins Commission's Search for a Moral Framework," *Journalism History* 6, 2 (Summer, 1979): 56.

sprout. If it doesn't, it won't sprout anyway."<sup>130</sup> The commission was reluctant to get involved in starting such a group because commission members didn't want their efforts misinterpreted as a desire to take a continuing role in watching over the media.<sup>131</sup> "The seed" (the recommendation for a citizens' commission) did not fall on fertile ground, and many years later when newspaper editors and publishers, educators, and public figures were polled on press responsibility, there was still a wide gap in attitudes toward criticism of the press.<sup>132</sup> Although public figures and educators expressed general approval of outside criticism of the press, editors and publishers were still generally against the idea.

The report came at an already stressful time for the press: ASNE and press association chiefs were working for a free press guarantee by the United Nations, and negative comments about U.S. media were not expected to help the cause; conservative publishers were trying to overturn a

---

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>132</sup> B. Hartung, "Attitudes Toward the Applicability of the Hutchins Report on Press Responsibility," *Journalism Quarterly* 58(3) (Fall, 1981): 428-433.

Supreme Court decision in the Associated Press antitrust suit; and college journalism professors were pushing for some sort of accreditation system, but the commission's tone led some to fear that accreditation might be a step toward licensing.<sup>133</sup>

### Effects of the Report

There were sharp criticisms from the press of the commission's work, criticisms that too much money had been spent (\$215,000), that the work had been done behind closed doors, that there were no members of the press on the commission, that there had been very little in the way of systematic research, and that there were some factual errors in the report.

Nonetheless, publication of *A Free and Responsible Press* was followed in the next few years by several attempts at self-criticism by the press. These attempts were apparently direct results of the Hutchins Commission report.<sup>134</sup> The American Press Institute was created (actually just before the formal report was issued) with a stated goal of the improvement of American newspapers. The first issue of

---

<sup>133</sup> Blanchard, *Hutchins*, 31.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.



Nieman Reports, the nation's first journalism review, was published; the National Council of Editorial Writers was formed and the Associated Press Managing Editors delivered a critique of AP practices. As Margaret Blanchard put it, it was "press criticism made respectable."<sup>135</sup> Blanchard concluded that *A Free and Responsible Press* did make a difference, that it was the spark that ignited a widespread effort at self-criticism and improvement. However, in her conclusion she noted that in 1955 Dr. Hutchins appeared before ASNE to label efforts by newspapers to improve their responsibility nothing more than public relations gimmickry.<sup>136</sup>

The problems that brought about formation of the Hutchins Commission in the 1940s were similar to concerns that were being expressed about the press in the 1990s. Therefore, examination of the work of the Hutchins Commission and the motivations behind formation of the commission is appropriate in examining the efforts of community journalists. Not only were the problems of the two time periods similar, so were the solutions offered to mitigate

---

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 51.

the problems. Solutions offered by community journalists in the 1990s appeared, in many ways, to echo Hutchins Commission recommendations.

CHAPTER 4  
COMMUNITY JOURNALISM: THE DEVIL IN DISGUISE?  
HUTCHINS IN THE NINETIES

The purpose of this chapter is to describe community journalism as it was practiced in the 1990s. A secondary purpose is to measure it against the recommendations of the Hutchins Commission. The chapter will first discuss the declared purpose of community journalism and then will describe several community journalism projects.

Today's equivalent, or perhaps the natural result, of the Hutchins Commission's recommendations is community journalism, a phenomenon that is fully as threatening to the welfare of today's press as the press of the 1940s thought the Hutchins Commission to be.<sup>137</sup> Members of the press saw the commission's report as an attempt to dictate how news was to be covered, as another attempt to diminish press independence. The Hutchins Commission, however, was what it

---

<sup>137</sup> The work of the Hutchins Commission is frequently mentioned in discussions of community journalism and is frequently referred to in many of the citations in the current research.

appeared to be from the outset. It was an attempt, financed by an owner of a media outlet, to cure some of the ills that had brought public criticism to the press. The present-day reincarnation of Hutchins is disguised as a cure for the ills of journalism when, in fact, it is something far different.<sup>138</sup>

### Selfless or Self-Serving?

Just as was the case with the Hutchins Commission, the professed purpose of community journalists is making journalism more responsive to the public, improving society and public life, doing journalism in a way that promotes community rather than individualism. When one examines community journalism practices, however, one detects another motive, intent to increase newspaper circulation and television viewership. Community journalism becomes a Trojan horse.

Davis Merritt, former editor of the *Wichita Eagle* and one of the champions of community journalism, has called for a democracy to have three fundamentals: (1) shared, relevant information; (2) a method or place for deliberation about the application of that information to public affairs; (3) shared

---

<sup>138</sup> Paul McMasters, "Merritt and McMasters Debate Public Journalism," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 11, 3 (1996), 171-183.

values on which to base decisions about that information.<sup>139</sup> Merritt claimed that objectivity should not be the watchword of journalism, that someone who is objective is too detached from what is happening around him to present the kind of journalism that an involved, communitarian journalist would produce. He called for journalists to be connected to the society on which they report, to attempt to do more than just find fault. Journalists should, said Merritt, attempt to "insure that Americans understand the true choices they have about issues so they can see themselves, their hopes, and their values again reflected in politics. In turn, this would result in a more responsive politics and the recapture of credibility by journalism."<sup>140</sup>

Critics of public journalism, such as Freedom Forum ombudsman Paul McMasters, have said Merritt's description sounds like nothing more than good, ethical journalism; in other words, "old wine in new bottles."<sup>141</sup> McMasters agreed with Ralph Barney of Brigham Young University, who said a major thrust, perhaps the major thrust of public journalism,

---

<sup>139</sup> Merritt, *Public Journalism and Public Life*, 7.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>141</sup> McMasters, "Debate," 175.

appears to be self-serving, i.e., "the recapture of credibility by journalism."<sup>142</sup> Responding to those criticisms, Merritt told his readers in 1995 that the "citizen-consumer" is alienated by tough journalism that does not provide solutions as well as facts about what is wrong with society.<sup>143</sup> He also gave example heaped upon example of what he called community journalism, such as:

Between the line of total involvement and the line of Hearst's famous "You supply the pictures, I'll supply the war" is a huge and promising middle ground. Public journalism operates in that ground, retaining neutrality on specifics and moving far enough beyond detachment to care about whether resolution occurs.<sup>144</sup>

Merritt acknowledged that some journalists would hear his description of community journalism as a description of good conventional journalism. He said he did not care, as long as the job is done right. Doing the job "right" is what seems to confuse so many of the community journalists. Merritt wrote, "What I don't like about public journalism is people who say they are practicing it when they don't know

---

<sup>142</sup> Barney, "Community Journalism," 140-151.

<sup>143</sup> Davis Merritt, Jr., and Paul McMasters, "Merritt and McMasters Debate Public Journalism," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 11, 3 (1996): 171-183.

<sup>144</sup> Merritt, *Public Journalism and Public Life*, 116.

what the hell they are doing and they haven't taken the first philosophic step to understand what it is."<sup>145</sup>

Although Merritt does not say so, it appears that some of the projects financed by the Pew Center for Civic Journalism in Washington, DC, would fall into his "don't know what the hell they are talking about" category. Those are the projects involving participants who have no apparent sense of a communitarian effort but are avowedly interested mainly in building circulation or ratings. The projects outlined below appear to be a mixture of these elements. There is some sincere effort in each one, but each one is diminished by bottom-line interests.

The Community Journalism Projects Sponsored by the  
Pew Center for Civic Journalism

The Pew Center for Civic Journalism brings together newspapers, broadcast stations, and citizens' groups in an attempt to improve life in targeted communities. The primary idea is to get people within communities involved in the public life of those communities, especially politics. People at the Pew Center and other community journalism proponents feel that journalism can thrive only if news consumers are involved in what is happening in the community

---

<sup>145</sup> Merritt and McMasters, "Merritt and Masters Debate Public Journalism, 174.

and are, therefore, interested in keeping up with daily events.<sup>146</sup>

The first three projects discussed below are Pew Center projects.<sup>147</sup> Those are the projects in Charlotte, Madison, and Tallahassee. The next two, in Boston and Seattle, indirectly involve the Center. The last two, in Columbus and New Orleans, are independent public journalism efforts. They are not all the same. Charlotte, Madison, Tallahassee, Boston, and Seattle are all projects put together with the purpose of increasing numbers of viewers and readers. They are projects which Paul McMasters has said are generated by "publishers and others worried about the bottom line" who are

---

<sup>146</sup> The Pew Center for Civic Journalism is funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, a Philadelphia consortium of seven charitable funds established between 1948 and 1979 by the children of Sun Oil Company founder Joseph N. Pew and his wife, Mary Anderson Pew. Pew Trusts claim assets of \$4.7 billion and annual grant commitments of about \$190 million. The Pew website describes the Pew mission as, "committed to the same fundamental values that guided the founders' lives: encouraging individual growth and potential; improving the quality of people's lives; maintaining and nurturing our democratic traditions; ensuring an educated and engaged citizenry; protecting religious freedom; and assisting and supporting those in need." Information found at <http://www.pewtrusts.com>.

<sup>147</sup> Jan Schaffer and Edward D. Miller (Eds.), *Civic Journalism: Six Case Studies*. Pew Center for Civic Journalism and The Poynter Institute for Media Studies. Washington, DC, 1995.



using public journalism as a way to "get some good vibes out there so that maybe people will start buying the paper again."<sup>148</sup> New Orleans and Columbus are indeed community journalism, with no purpose but to improve life in the community. However, community journalism critics, such as McMasters, have expressed fears that even doing community journalism the way its proponents advocate robs journalists of their autonomy because the journalists become too involved with the people they are supposed to cover.<sup>149</sup>

The projects described below all had the apparent goals of communitarianism at their foundation. They all appear to be meant to improve public life in some way. Some of the projects are meant to increase participation in the political process, some are meant to make citizens feel better about living in their communities, and some are meant only to increase the amount of good or lessen the amount of evil in their community. The word, "apparent," is useful at this point because, although all are community journalism projects, not all are equally unselfish.

---

<sup>148</sup> Merritt and McMasters, "Debate," 181.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 178.

In some cases, determining what kind of support and how much support was granted by the Pew Center is difficult. The director of the Center refers questions on specific grants to her assistant. The assistant, Associate Director Walter Dean, said in May 2000 that the Center does not release specific information for civic journalism projects in which Pew has been involved.<sup>150</sup> For cases in which the news organizations involved are not forthcoming with information, it is necessary to extrapolate from general figures the amount of aid that may have been provided by Pew for specific projects. That is a task that becomes nearly impossible when the myriad of projects and figures are thrown into the mix.

It has been reported that Pew contributed \$40 million to media projects between 1993 and 1998.<sup>151</sup> Of that \$40 million, it has also been reported that \$6.4 million went specifically to civic journalism projects between 1993 and 1996. In 1993, the Pew Center for Civic Journalism also gave \$600 thousand to the Radio-Television News Directors Foundation "to foster partnerships between electronic and print media to do civic

---

<sup>150</sup> Telephone conversation with Walter Dean, 1 May 2000.

<sup>151</sup> Kate Shatzin, "Ways to Shake Up the News Media; Innovation,," *Baltimore Sun*, 8 August 1999, 2A.

journalism projects."<sup>152</sup> In the same year, NPR received \$290 thousand from Pew for its Voter Project, which involved five public radio stations. The stations were charged with providing election coverage that "would stimulate citizen interest."<sup>153</sup> The project received another \$250 thousand from Pew in 1996.<sup>154</sup> Also in 1996, the Pew Center provided \$575 thousand for seventeen newspaper/radio/television partnerships for community-oriented projects.<sup>155</sup> If divided evenly, that would be almost \$39 thousand for each project. The projects, however, are not all the same in scope or duration, and it is likely that some projects get more money than others. The Center also sponsors civic journalism workshops and awards cash prizes for projects it considers outstanding examples of civic journalism. Some of the news organizations involved in Pew-backed civic journalism projects are not as reluctant to release information as is the Pew Center. In the following sections on specific projects, figures provided by those involved are included in

---

<sup>152</sup> Alicia Shepard, "The Pew Connection," *American Journalism Review*, April, 1996, 24.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

footnotes, if those figures were provided. If not, that is also mentioned.

### Charlotte

In Charlotte, North Carolina, the Charlotte Observer and WSOC-TV teamed up for the "Taking Back Our Neighborhoods/ Carolina Crime Solutions" project. The killing of two police officers in an ambush sparked the 1993 project. The newspaper and the television station spearheaded efforts to decrease crime in Charlotte. They conducted polls, held town meetings, and, through data analysis, pinpointed the neighborhoods in Charlotte most affected by crime. Two local radio stations were taken on as partners in the anticrime campaign. Community leaders, longtime residents, and other members of the community with an interest in cutting crime in Charlotte were brought together on a citizens' panel. A community coordinator was hired, her salary underwritten by the Pew Center. Charlene Price-Patterson, a nonjournalist, helped organized neighborhood meetings where citizen opinion was gathered. Price-Patterson wrote in the Pew Center's newsletter that she also "arranged child care, refreshments, and transportation and spent some time 'knocking on doors to

publicize the event.'"<sup>156</sup> Telephone numbers for people who wanted to volunteer were published in the Observer as part of a seven-page spread on the project. There were other multi-page stories. WSOC-TV's main anchor moderated a town meeting. Several television programs were produced with the project as topic. Charlotte's mayor got involved. The project had the desired effect. Media scrutiny brought action, such as the clearing of a neighborhood lot where a girl had been raped, when complaints from the public had proved futile.<sup>157</sup>

#### Madison

In Madison, Wisconsin, a 1991 project involving the Wisconsin State Journal, WISC-TV, Wisconsin Public TV, Wisconsin Public Radio, and the Wood Communications public relations firm began as a way to get citizens involved in the 1992 presidential primary. The project, called "We The People," continued into 2000 and was expanded to involve people in town meetings all over the state.<sup>158</sup> The town

---

<sup>156</sup> Ibid. Several calls were placed in mid-May 2000 to the Charlotte Observer. Messages were left requesting information on few dollar contributions to the "Taking Back Our Neighborhoods" project. Calls were not returned.

<sup>157</sup> Shaffer and Miller, *Civic Journalism*, 4-11.

<sup>158</sup> This project had no link to the 1940s radio program of the same name. The name likeness was apparently coincidental.

meetings were forums on how public issues are affecting the private lives of Wisconsin residents. The "town meetings" were held in several locations at once, all visible and audible to people at the other meetings via satellite hookup. When a political campaign was underway, it was the voters who asked the questions, bypassing "formulaic journalism and giv[ing] citizens creative ways to get information and interact with each other and with politicians."<sup>159</sup> The town hall meetings were conducted in two steps. First, those who were to participate met with a facilitator to focus on the issues that were to be discussed in phase two, which was when the participants questioned the candidates directly. Voters were sometimes allowed to act as legislators in mock hearings on issues in the state; they were sometimes allowed to write mock budgets. Journal Associate Editor Tom Still saw the project as "enlightened self-interest."<sup>160</sup> The "enlightened"

---

<sup>159</sup> Shaffer and Miller, *Civic Journalism*, 12.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 18. On 18 May 2000, Still had difficulty recalling exact figures for Pew contributions. He remembered that Pew had made two grants of approximately \$20,000 and another for \$25,000. There had been no grants from Pew for the other five years the project had been in existence. The Madison project was the longest-lived of the projects mentioned in this dissertation. As of mid 2000, it was still in existence with a campaign called "Growing Up . . . Growing Older."

aspect was the part project partners are playing in enlightening the public. The "self-interest" part was "by getting people in on the ground floor, getting them more excited about this kind of process, we think they become better, or more regular, newspaper readers."<sup>161</sup> After the program's inception, two more partners joined: CBS affiliate WISC-TV and Wisconsin Public Radio. The partners organized several civic journalism projects every year. It was estimated that hundreds of thousands of people watched television broadcasts, listened to radio broadcasts, or read newspaper articles about "We the People."

#### Tallahassee

A similar project, called "The Public Agenda," in Tallahassee, Florida, was not as focused as other community journalism efforts and, therefore, apparently did not have as much impact, but the news organizations involved said "The Public Agenda" did generate good story ideas. In that project, the Tallahassee Democrat, Tallahassee's WCTV-TV, Florida State University, and Florida A&M University gathered 300 citizens together in the chamber of the Florida House of Representatives in November 1994. That meeting laid the

---

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 18.

groundwork for dozens of other, smaller meetings of Tallahassee residents who wanted a voice in the issues affecting their communities. The project used a free internet service and had its own World Wide Web page. The Public Agenda relied heavily on focus groups to determine which issues were important in the eyes of members of the community. WCTV-TV General Manager David Olmsted said there was a practical side to the project: "It puts your newsroom in touch with the issues."<sup>162</sup> WCTV-TV pledged to air town hall programs during the project, as well as give "The Public Agenda" news coverage. Two Tallahassee Democrat reporters were assigned to cover the project and began coverage with a four-part, page-one series. Reporters said they were not always able to develop stories from the town hall meetings that were part of "The Public Agenda," but they did get story ideas from those meetings. There was, however, resistance from people taking part in the town hall meetings, afraid that media coverage would inhibit discussion.<sup>163</sup> The Democrat did not cover the story as thoroughly as its editors promised. The project was never completely accepted in the newsroom and was never completely integrated into the paper's

---

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 29.



coverage. Democrat editor Lou Heldman related that the project "focused widespread attention on the need for involvement, but [fell] short of our goal of getting thousands of citizens committed to ongoing dialogue."<sup>164</sup>

### Boston

The Poynter Institute in St. Petersburg, Florida, has also become involved in civic journalism efforts, teaming up with National Public Radio, with a financial assist from the Pew Center.<sup>165</sup> In Boston in 1994, the *Boston Globe*, WBZ-TV, and WBUR-FM joined forces with Poynter to initiate "The People's Voice," a campaign to get people more involved in

---

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 29. The project director of this program was Mimi Jones. In may 2000, Jones recalled that the Pew Center had given "The Public Agenda" a three year grant of \$135 thousand.

<sup>165</sup> The Poynter Institute was created in 1975 by Nelson Poynter, publisher of the St. Petersburg Times and *Congressional Quarterly*. Prior to his death in 1978, he willed the controlling stock in his company to the institute. Working professionals, journalism teachers and students attend classes at Poynter, usually for one or two weeks at a time. The classes are designed to give students the tools to practice ethical journalism. Poynter also promotes and assists various journalism projects, such as the civic journalism projects supported by the Pew Center. Information on the Poynter Institute is found on the web at <http://www.poynter.org/connect.htm>. Poynter did not offer direct financial support for community journalism projects in which it became involved. Any grants awarded came from the Pew Center.

the election process. Journalism professor Jay Rosen of New York University, one of the main proponents of public journalism, spent time in Boston helping to organize The People's Voice. To some it seemed like nothing more than good journalism--find out what issues concern the public and cover those issues. "The same old wine in a not very new bottle" was the phrase used by Globe business correspondent Bruce Gellerman to describe this civic journalism project.<sup>166</sup> A lack of enthusiasm from the public, as evidenced by poor public attendance at focus group meetings, changed the project along the way. Globe political editor Bruce Mohl admits that, although the project started as an attempt to set an agenda around what the people wanted to talk about, it eventually switched to finding ways to fit people into the paper's election coverage. Business correspondent Bruce Gellerman agrees that the people became the story.<sup>167</sup>

---

<sup>166</sup> Shaffer and Miller, *Civic Journalism*, 32.

<sup>167</sup> This was one of the projects for which Pew contribution information was unavailable. Assistant Managing Editor Walter Robinson said by telephone in mid May 2000 that was "beyond my ability to answer" a question about Pew contributions. Robinson deferred to Editorial Director Don MacGillis who had been more involved with the project. MacGillis did not call back. Robinson did report that the People's Voice project was defunct, that it had had mixed results and that the concept of community journalism was redundant.

Seattle

The Seattle Times and two public radio stations combined for the "Front Porch Forum" in 1994, another effort to involve citizens in the political process, to get readers and listeners more interested in the topics being covered by journalists. The partners in this project literally built a front porch where voters could talk to each other and to political candidates. There were "call-in shows, question and answer columns, roundtable discussions, and even an unusual candidate debate with five undecided voters as the panel."<sup>168</sup> The project was not necessarily new ground for the Times, which had abandoned horse-race coverage of political races in the eighties. There were the usual concerns among staff that this was not the kind of undertaking appropriate for a news organization. Some worried that simply passing along citizens' questions to candidates would produce inaccurate information that would go unchallenged because journalists were not as fully involved as they would have been without the so-called public journalism aspect. As a result of those doubts, follow-up stories had to be assigned to give some of the questions and answers context. There

---

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 48.

were also follow-up stories suggested by the results of polls conducted by the Times and the two public radio stations. Representatives of all the media outlets involved agreed that good journalism cannot be abandoned in a civic journalism project. Among the stated goals of the Seattle project was to "create good PR for our representative organizations."<sup>169</sup> The "representative organizations" were the partners in the Front Porch Forum. The PR aspect of the project was apparently very important to the partners. Said one KPLU staffer, "You can't buy exposure like that on the front page of the Seattle Times."<sup>170</sup>

#### Columbus

The Columbus *Ledger-Enquirer* organized another civic journalism effort in the late 1980s in Columbus, Georgia. Employees at the *Ledger* determined that the town's leadership was doing nothing to effect change in the town where change was needed. Schools were bad; there was racism; there was poverty; and wages were substandard. "Columbus Beyond 2000" was born when executives at the *Ledger* determined that no one

---

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 55. Seattle Times Assistant National Editor Carole Carmichael was the Pew contact for Front Porch Forum. Carmichael would not give information on the project when contacted, but promised to call back. She did not call back.

else in town was going to do anything to solve local problems, and that included the city's elected leaders. A series of questionnaires was administered to residents to determine what was bothering the community, what the issues were that the community needed to address. After a year of surveys and follow-up interviews, an eight-part series ran in the *Ledger*. In addition to listing the problems, the paper printed an agenda for progress. There was not a great deal of reaction to the series from civic leaders, so, at the urging of people in the community, once again stepping outside the normal boundaries of journalism, the paper's leaders formed a task force. William Winn, who was the senior reporter on the project, reported that even after the Columbus Beyond 2000 campaign there were still problems in Columbus, but there was a new civic spirit; even business owners, who were at first threatened by "Columbus Beyond 2000," were getting on the bandwagon. There was still racism. There was still poverty. Not everyone had the civic spirit. There was a tax freeze as a result of the revolt of property-tax payers. There was still weak political leadership. In addition, the careers of many employees at the paper were affected; some of those employees thought that they were doing something other than journalism and chose to

leave the paper. Resentment was so acute among staffers that after a survey conducted by Knight-Ridder, which owns the newspaper, showed executive editor Jack Swift to be the focus of employee resentment, Swift committed suicide. No one claims that Swift's only motive for suicide was his unpopularity in the newsroom, but it was apparently a factor. Nonetheless, Winn said, if given the opportunity, he would take part again in a similar project. Winn admits that much of what is called "public journalism" is just another way of saying "bad journalism." Winn uses the word "corporate" frequently when talking about the problems of public journalism. The term "public journalism," says Winn, shows up in all the corporate reports, even though the people using the term don't know what it means. He also says newspapers have lost touch with their communities, and one of the reasons is corporate ownership. Implicit in what Winn says is that executives of big corporations are trying to build readership with a gimmick called "public journalism."<sup>171</sup>

#### New Orleans

In the 1991 Louisiana elections, David Duke was running for governor. His opponent was former governor Edwin Edwards

---

<sup>171</sup> William Winn, Lecture at University of Florida, Spring 1996.

known for being at the center of controversy over his own alleged lack of ethics. Edwards had been indicted, but not convicted, on bribery and racketeering charges.<sup>172</sup> Staffers at the *Times-Picayune* in New Orleans made the decision that David Duke, with his Ku Klux Klan background and his views on race, was the greater of two evils. The newspaper embarked on an undisguised effort to bring about Duke's defeat. Keith Woods, then city editor of the paper, wrote in an editorial that if Duke were elected, he (Woods) would leave Louisiana because he would not live in a state governed by a bigot. The effort to bring about Duke's defeat was not limited to the editorial pages. Woods said, "The passion behind our editorial writing was also behind sending 40 people out to produce a volume of reporting on this election and on Duke." Woods says there was no attempt to uncover new truths about Edwards and, "there was no distinction between the editorials and the news coverage. It wasn't a blurring of the lines. It was an erasing of the lines."<sup>173</sup>

---

<sup>172</sup> J. Yardley, "Fast Eddie Slows Down," *Atlanta Constitution*, 7 January 1996, 8c.

<sup>173</sup> J. Black, B. Steele, and R. Barney, *Doing Ethics in Journalism* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995), 73.

As mentioned above, the first five examples were similar. It is admirable that the news organizations and the public relations group involved were working to increase public awareness of and participation in the democratic process. It has already been noted in this dissertation that a moral deed is only moral if it is selected for its own sake.<sup>174</sup> Although some may consider it arbitrary, that is the standard to be applied throughout the present work. When the comments of those practicing public journalism are read, it is clear that the purpose of much community journalism is not primarily to make the news consumer more aware of the democratic process; it is to make her a more avid news consumer with more of an appetite for newspapers and broadcast news. Comments such as, "You can't buy exposure like that on the front page of the *Seattle Times*," and "[B]y getting people in on the ground floor, getting them more excited about this kind of process, we think they become better, or more regular, newspaper readers," betray self-serving motivations, rather than an intent to improve public life.

---

<sup>174</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, D. Ross, trans. (Oxford: Oxford Press, 1987), 53.



The last two examples were different. The journalists who were in support of the projects in Columbus and New Orleans were indeed doing what they thought best for the community, even though it violated many of their journalistic principles. Billy Winn of the *Columbus-Ledger* has said that to be an effective public journalist, you must risk some of yourself; you "must get into the boat with the people."<sup>175</sup> The idea was the same in New Orleans. The *Times-Picayune* got "into the boat." There was obvious risk to the paper, yet no indication that its stand would increase circulation. Indeed, there was a risk of losing the Duke faithful as readers. There are many similarities between the journalism practiced in New Orleans and Columbus and the journalism of the three 1960s broadcasters who will be profiled in this dissertation.

The projects in Charlotte, Madison, Tallahassee, Boston, and Seattle displayed an intent beyond contributing to public life. All five had bottom-line considerations as at least partial motivation. They were being used, as Paul McMasters said, to "get some good vibes out there so that maybe people will start buying the paper again."<sup>176</sup>

---

<sup>175</sup> Winn lecture, 1996.

<sup>176</sup> Merritt and McMasters, "Debate," 181.

The projects in New Orleans and Columbus were driven by more purely altruistic intent. There was no outside support for either the New Orleans or Columbus project. They were conceived within the newsrooms of the organizations involved. They were conceived out of concern for the community. In both instances, the journalists involved were risking something with little chance they would reap anything more than improving public life.

CHAPTER 5  
ANOTHER DILEMMA OF COMMUNITY JOURNALISM:  
THE INDIVIDUAL VERSUS THE MAJORITY

In this brief chapter, the issue to be considered in discussing community journalism is the danger that a communitarian view is antithetical to the libertarian nature of United States history and, in particular, the United States press. If a news organization is concerned with being part of the community as it promotes community values and norms, there is danger that the rights of individuals will become secondary. The views of community journalism proponents, who claim communitarianism is the cure for many of society's ills, are discussed. The opposite view, the view that communitarianism stifles liberty, is also considered.

Anderson, Dardenne, and Killenberg, in 1996, described public journalism as a sort of conversational commons, the idea being that journalism should provide a forum for all to

express opinions.<sup>177</sup> They advocated giving more people voice in the standard conduits of information. They lamented that the Internet was usurping the duties of newspapers without the involvement of journalists. One is tempted to write in the margin, "So what?" What Anderson and his co-authors were saying was that the press must combat loss of influence with a marketing strategy to keep customers interested.

Two years earlier, Jay Rosen claimed that journalism was at a dead end. The way to get rolling again was to renounce the old ways, to find a new road-involvement in social change. Rosen and Merritt would have the press become activists, abandoning the old value of objectivity. They have asked the press to become involved; let personal views play a part in the way a story is covered instead of stepping back, refusing to become personally involved.<sup>178</sup> J.H. Altschull would go a step further, would have the media become mediators in societal disputes.<sup>179</sup> "The mediator finds

---

<sup>177</sup> R. Anderson, R. Dardenne, and G.M. Killenberg, *The American Newspaper as the Public Conversational Commons*, *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 11, 3 (1996): 159-165.

<sup>178</sup> Jay Rosen, "Public Journalism: First Principles," in *Public Journalism: Theory and Practice*. Jay Rosen & Davis Merritt eds. (Dayton: Kettering Foundation, 1994), 6-18.

<sup>179</sup> J.H. Altschull, "A Crisis of Conscience: Is Community Journalism the Answer?" *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 11-3 (1996): 166-172.

the places where antagonists are in agreement, no matter how small the area."<sup>180</sup> This agreement, according to Altschull, will bring the public out of its well-known apathy, and "people need to care if they are going to tune in to and read the news."<sup>181</sup>

Louis Hodges could be described as a modern-day social contract theorist within the journalism community, noting that we are living in a world in which he says one's personal rights are paramount.<sup>182</sup> Hodges was obviously writing from a western point of view; in some parts of the world, food is more important than liberty, but Hodges, like social contractarians before him, has pointed out that individual liberties mean nothing unless others are duty-bound to honor those liberties.<sup>183</sup> The result, said Hodges, of such stress

---

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>182</sup> L. Hodges, *Ruminations About the Communitarian Debate*. *Journal of Mass media Ethics* 11, 3 (1996): 133-139.

<sup>183</sup> There are two forms of social contract, one between rulers and subjects, the other between members of society. Hodges is referring to the latter. The social contract in this case is an agreement between members of society to obey the same laws everyone else has promised to obey. In this arrangement, each member of society not only knows he is safe from harm from other members of society, but also that he is duty-bound not to harm others. Social contractarians contend that without such an arrangement society falls into

on individual liberty is lots of rights talk and no duties talk. We live, said Hodges, in a world where reason is out and feeling is in, where individuals and groups follow their own specialized interests, where there is a messiah, with all the answers, on every street corner, or at least on every radio station. Too much individualism. The communitarian ideal, according to Hodges, rather than threatening personal liberties, might save them. In Hodges' view, the fixation on individualism is what threatened individual liberties because it did not acknowledge the rights of others. Communitarianism, on the other hand, said Hodges, does acknowledge the responsibility that goes along with freedom and, therefore, would enhance individual rights. In other words, give up a little freedom to get a lot.

Glasser and Kraft claimed that public journalism, which might be described as "journalism of conversation," to use

---

chaos. For a complete discussion of contract theory, see: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*; in Michael L. Morgan, ed., *Classics of Moral and Political Theory* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992), 568-733; John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Peter Laslett, ed. (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1960); John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass., Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971); and Jean Jacques Rousseau, *On The Social Contract*, in Michael L. Morgan, ed., *Classics of Moral and Political Theory* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992), 913-987.

James Carey's term,<sup>184</sup> is a journalism of hope, a journalism that preaches that there is a chance for the community to be a better place for all of us, and "us" includes the journalist as participant, not outside observer.<sup>185</sup> Glasser and Kraft, however, found public journalism lacking in openness. What they meant by "openness" is that public journalists should open up the books, so to speak, to allow news consumers a view of the decision-making process in the newsroom, and open up the editorial page for more criticism of the press from the public.

Ralph Barney acknowledged in 1996 that the news business was a business in decline, with newspaper circulation off 35 percent since 1965 and over-the-air television viewing, particularly news, down 20 percent in just two years. Barney wrote that communitarianism and communitarian journalism are only stops along the way to destruction. While admitting that the unprincipled individualism that is the enemy of communitarianism is also destructive, Barney said it is

---

<sup>184</sup> James Carey, "The Press, Public Opinion, and Public Discourse," in T.L. Glasser and C.T. Salmon, eds., *Public Opinion and the Communication of Consent* (New York: Guilford Press., 1995), 373-402.

<sup>185</sup> T.L. Glasser and S. Craft, "Public Journalism and the Prospects for Press Accountability, *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 11, 3 (1996): 152-158.

individualism (principled) that will save us from threats to press independence, including community journalism. Barney's main complaint about community journalism was that it places loyalty to the group or society above liberty, as well as above truth. Barney pointed out that in a communitarian society, liberty is secondary to the group and, therefore, to the will of the group power elite. Truth is also secondary to community; if the truth hurts the group, don't print it. If a reporter is a cheerleader for the community, she/he is powerless to bring about needed change, to point out the factors that make change possible or desirable. According to Barney, that is what is happening in community journalism. Barney wrote, "Media desperation is creating unconditional membership in professional communities. A 'we will do whatever you want if you will read/listen' attitude that gallops through society."<sup>186</sup>

Individualism was Barney's antidote for community journalism, but it was individualism without the selfishness that has caused the press problems that now have journalists begging to be liked by the community and offering their independence and integrity as a white flag. Individualism

---

<sup>186</sup> Barney, "Community Journalism," 143-151.



will tolerate community as well as pluralistic information, said Barney but, "Communitarianism at its most effective is intolerant of individualism and controlling of information."<sup>187</sup> When Barney spoke of individualism (in journalists) with selfishness, he was speaking of the kinds of phenomena that are mentioned in the freedom Forum polls, of the kinds of phenomena that were mentioned by the Hutchins Commission in 1947, phenomena such as sensationalism in reporting and big business and advertisers pulling strings and influencing news coverage. A journalist must be morally developed, said Barney, ideally well along the way toward what sociologist Lawrence Kohlberg called the Post-Conventional stages.<sup>188</sup> At this level of development, Kohlberg maintained that one is no longer driven by the desire to please others or the desire to avoid punishment but is driven by the higher virtues, such as respect for the liberty of all individuals. But within a communitarian society, according to Barney, one never gets to this stage because of the overwhelming weight of community opinion and the need to conform to society's norms and values. The end

---

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>188</sup> Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981).

result of this communitarian outlook: "Society will evolve to fit conditions described earlier, rule-bound, predictable, and convenient; all questions answered, no new ones needed; all behavior prescribed, few examinations of existing rules required or allowed."<sup>189</sup>

Paul McMasters, the past president of the Society of Professional Journalists and First Amendment Ombudsman for the Freedom Forum, who was quoted earlier in this study, is not a fan of community journalism, even when it is practiced in a way of which community journalism advocate, Davis Merritt, also quoted earlier, would approve, that is, without the primary aim of building ratings or readership. McMasters has expressed the opinion that journalists should never lose sight of the basics in reporting and pointed out that those who say they are practicing community journalism very seldom mention the First Amendment.<sup>190</sup> McMasters expressed the view that the attempt to gain public support through community journalism is misguided, that the press is in greater danger of losing public support if it fails to perform its "special role."<sup>191</sup>

---

<sup>189</sup> Barney, "Community Journalism," 151.

<sup>190</sup> Paul McMasters, "Debate," 182.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 177.

McMasters said he agreed with Thomas Jefferson's view that an informed citizenry will want to participate in public life. Jay Rosen and other public journalism advocates, he said, have turned Jefferson's principle upside down. According to McMasters, the community journalists contend that citizens who participate will want to be informed and, by implication, buy newspapers and listen to and watch news.<sup>192</sup>

In speaking of civic journalists, McMasters said:

Every one of them has a little Sally Fields in there that wants to say, "You like me! You really like me!" And that could be the most dangerous human impulse that a journalist could have, because I think it deprives that journalist of the ability to do the right thing in many cases.

We have, when we're on duty, a special obligation to cover democracy's parade, not join it. We can join the parade in all sorts of other ways when we're not on duty. We're not journalists every hour of the day. We're not writing every hour of the day. But not only is it a special obligation of us to cover that parade with the unique perspective of the observer not to participate, it is sometimes incumbent upon us as journalists to rain on that parade. But I think that if we're marching in it, we're not going to rain on it.<sup>193</sup>

Although John Stuart Mill did not mention community journalism, the following statement by Mill has resonance

---

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 182.

today when speaking of what Barney calls "democracy's parade."

The chief mischief of the legal penalties is that they strengthen the social stigma. It is that stigma which is really effective, and so effective is it, that the profession of opinions which are under the ban of society is much less common in England, than is, in many other countries, the avowal of those which incur risk of judicial punishment.<sup>194</sup>

Mill was saying that what Alexis de Tocqueville called the "tyranny of the majority"<sup>195</sup> could be even more stifling than oppressive laws. That is what communitarianism is: a suppression of individual rights in the interest of community, the majority.

The third fundamental (above) of Merritt's democracy calls for "shared values," that is values shared by journalists and their readers or viewers. That is a valid community press ideal, but not valid for an independent press charged with responsibility for a Millian enlightenment of society's participants. If journalists share the same values

---

<sup>194</sup> M.L. Morgan, ed., *Classics of Moral and Political Theory* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992), 1063.

<sup>195</sup> J. Stone and S. Mennell, eds., *Alexis de Tocqueville on Democracy, Revolution, and Society: Selected Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 22.

as their public, they will not, as Merrill says, rain on their own parade.

There is a secondary question to consider in a study involving community journalism. The first question is concerned with defining true community journalism, with investigating the honesty of declared motivation. The secondary question involves asking whether community journalism in itself, even when done properly, is a force for good or a force that will be detrimental to society. Community journalists must ask if they are involved in an activity that will diminish individual liberties as it attempts to improve the lives of the individuals involved. Journalists opposed to community journalism must also question their own practices, must ask themselves if, as community journalists claim, an individual, objective approach to journalism is harming the community.

CHAPTER 6  
STATE OF THE TV EDITORIAL IN THE 1960S

As American mass media moved into the 1960s, members of the press and public expressed fear that the nation's great editorial voices were diminishing, not only in number, but also in vigor. Those voices had, for the most part, been newspapers, but as early as 1938, *Editor and Publisher* told its readers:

There are . . . about 1,200 cities in which single newspapers or single ownerships now supply all the printed news. . . . The danger remains that freedom for minority expression will be curtailed. . . . The American system thrives best when ideas strike sparks and opposites rub each other into useable size and shape.<sup>196</sup>

Ten years later, Institute of Public Administration President Luther H. Gulick expressed similar lamentations:

While the radio has expanded the opportunity for civic enlightenment, it is still the independent and fearless newspaper that exercises local civic leadership. It is tragic that as to newspapers we are worse off today than we were forty years ago. There are fewer independent local newspapers, and fewer crusaders running them.<sup>197</sup>

---

<sup>196</sup> *Editor and Publisher*, 31 December 1938, 20.

<sup>197</sup> A. Gayle Waldrop, *Editor and Editorial Writer*, (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1948), 423.

In this chapter, the status of the broadcast editorial during the period under study is examined. First, the impact of regulatory change is explained. Then, the approaches to editorials taken by both network and local broadcasters are explored.

### Impact of Regulations

It is important to note that this research is concerned with broadcasters who were bold enough to editorialize or concerned with community enough to want to. This work examines the actions and attitudes of those who might fall into the community journalist kind. The point is made frequently in this study that many broadcasters cared little for risking bottom-line in order to offer opinion. They are not the broadcasters of interest here, except as they offer contrast to the subjects of this research.

Radio broadcasters interested in offering opinion had been reluctant to step into the editorial breach. They had first been told by the Federal Communications Commission in its 1941 Mayflower Decision that they were not to editorialize at all because it was not in the public interest. According to the commission:

Under the American system of broadcasting it is clear that responsibility for the conduct of a broadcast station must rest initially with the broadcaster. It is

equally clear that with the limitations in frequencies inherent in the nature of radio, the public interest can never be served by a dedication of any broadcast facility to the support of his own partisan ends. . . . A truly free radio cannot be used to advocate the causes of the licensee. It cannot be used to support the candidacies of his friends. It cannot be devoted to the support of the principles he happens to regard most favorably. In brief, the broadcaster cannot be an advocate.<sup>198</sup>

Even when the government, after telling broadcasters for eight years that they could not be advocates, reversed its position in 1949, encouraging broadcasters to editorialize as long as they aired opposing views, broadcasters were not anxious to forfeit valuable air time to their ideological opponents.<sup>199</sup> Nor were they certain how to approach a nebulous new freedom. Some observers expressed the opinion that broadcasters had indeed been given much greater latitude in handling broadcast opinion. Others said broadcasters were still operating under the restrictions of the old Mayflower Doctrine, but with slightly loosened reins.<sup>200</sup> New York Times columnist Jack Gould summed it up this way:

---

<sup>198</sup> Federal Communications Commission *The Yankee Network* (WAAB), Docket 5618 and 5640, 16 January 1941.

<sup>199</sup> John L. Hulteng, *The Opinion Function* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 141-142.

<sup>200</sup> Sammy R. Danna, "Broadcast Editorializing," *Freedom of Information Center Publication No. 141*, School of Journalism, University of Missouri, 1965.



Its [the Fairness Doctrine's] chief drawback is that it is not clear and specific. . . . The broadcaster who wants to know what he can do next had better not dispense with legal counsel, yet. . . . What the FCC has now adopted as a solution to the vexing problem is a compromise. . . . In short, the broadcaster as an individual can be a partisan advocate, but his station cannot. Certainly, it will be interesting to watch the broadcaster play on one team and also umpire the game.<sup>201</sup>

The Times also warned on its editorial page that perhaps the Fairness Doctrine gave the FCC even more power over broadcasters because instead of a no-editorial policy, the broadcasters were now subject to FCC control of whatever editorial policy they might decide to pursue.<sup>202</sup>

As broadcasters approached and entered the 1960s, they were uncertain how to tackle the question of whether to editorialize at all and, if so, how to go about it? The broadcasters' right to editorialize had been alternately discouraged and encouraged by government. Television Quarterly said, "The TV editorialist does not always proceed in a high state of confidence."<sup>203</sup> In 1964, John E. McMillin

---

<sup>201</sup> Jack Gould, "The FCC Issues a Report on the Right of Broadcasters to Air Their Views," *New York Times*, 12 June 1949, 9.

<sup>202</sup> Editorial, *New York Times*, "Radio Editorials," 4 June 1949, 12L.

<sup>203</sup> *Television Quarterly*, Summer 1964, Vol. III, No. 3, Introduction to John E. McMillin, "Voices in a New Democracy," 27.

wrote that broadcast editorializing was still "only in a developmental stage. . . . [T]he country's near-600 television stations are engaging in editorializing in a kind of policy chaos."<sup>204</sup> It should have been no surprise, said McMillin, that a promising trend to editorialize had slowed to a trickle and that there was evidence broadcasters had become somewhat less courageous in tackling significant, controversial subjects."<sup>205</sup>

McMillin divided the history of the editorial concept into four phases. The first had been the early radio period when broadcasters showed little interest in editorializing because they were developing in different directions. The second was the Mayflower period when FCC edict forbade editorializing. The third phase was the reversal and development period when the Fairness Doctrine seemed to encourage broadcasters to speak their minds, as long as opposing views were heard. The final phase, in McMillin's view, writing in 1964, was the then current period of

---

<sup>204</sup> John E. McMillin, "Voices in a New Democracy," *Television Quarterly*, Summer 1964, Vol. III, No. 3, 27. McMillin was apparently referring to those nearly 200 stations that were actually editorializing, not saying that all 600 stations were delivering editorials.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

executive confusion. During this time, according to McMillin, the FCC was receiving more complaints about editorials; FCC interpretations of the Fairness Doctrine were becoming more involved; certain segments of the industry had become alarmed over seeming "inconsistencies and unreasonableness of the commission's rulings"; and even Congress was investigating broadcast editorializing.<sup>206</sup>

McMillin noted the beginnings of a movement to television editorializing in 1958 and a sharper interest during the next several years. After 1962, however, McMillin noted that the number of broadcasters rushing to editorialize had slowed to a trickle. McMillin cited a survey by the Television Information Office. The survey cited responses of 157 editorializing stations. Through 1957, only fourteen stations had begun to editorialize, but in 1958 alone twenty stations began delivering editorials. Eighteen more began in 1959, twenty-two in 1960, thirty-two in 1961, and forty-two in 1962. In 1963, only eight television stations began editorializing. Despite the 1963 slowdown, by 1964 McMillin was able to cite surveys by the National Association of Broadcasters and the Television Information Office that

---

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 29.

showed nearly a third of the country's television stations were delivering editorials.<sup>207</sup> McMillin does not speculate, but possible reasons for the increase in editorializing are the realization by station management that they had more freedom to editorialize, that they could better serve their communities by editorializing, and recognition that editorializing was paying off in increased ratings for some station that were editorializing.

Television had taken its cue from radio. McMillin wrote, "A handful of radio stations had clearly demonstrated to the industry that a station could operate as a forceful meaningful editorial voice, and the example stimulated the adoption of editorial techniques in the more complex TV medium."<sup>208</sup> Furthermore, the FCC was making it clear that it now encouraged broadcast editorializing, although confusion about how an acceptable editorial policy was to be developed persisted.

---

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 33.

### Timid Editorialists

Unlike his predecessors, FCC Chairman Newton Minnow was a strong voice for editorializing. In 1962, Minnow told the NAB's First Editorializing Conference in Washington:

I want to talk today about broadcasting's inescapable duty to make its voice ring with intelligence and leadership. The plain and unhappy fact is that our traditional avenues of communication are contracting not expanding. We are witnessing an odd and distressing phenomenon. The population is increasing at an explosive rate . . . but in the eye of this hurricane the number of metropolitan newspapers which traditionally have served our people is decreasing.

I believe it is a matter of urgent national importance that radio and television reach out for their greatest potential--for broadcasting opens up a dimension in communications which the more traditional processes of the printed word cannot achieve.<sup>209</sup>

It is no wonder that attempts at editorializing during this period were halting. Nonetheless, as McMillin wrote:

This phenomenon of broadcast editorializing is still only in a developmental stage; [and] . . . though in its infancy, it is providing an entirely new interest in a wide variety of community affairs, and is providing new voices which American democracy has not known before.<sup>210</sup>

Many of the "new voices" were still reluctant to mount aggressive, hard-hitting editorial campaigns or crusades. Ashdown wrote, "Television stations have made strides toward reporting public issues, but most television stations are

---

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 50.

reluctant to take strong positions, perhaps in anticipation of government censures or domination of time by opponents seeking time for rebuttal."<sup>211</sup>

Others criticized television broadcasters for their timidity. Ed Routt, in his work on broadcasting and editorials, wrote that broadcasters were too afraid or too lethargic to advance strong editorial opinion.<sup>212</sup> Electronic Journalism author and professor of the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University, William A. Wood, asserted:

With a few notable exceptions, most stations got into the field with some caution, and editorials championing motherhood and demanding fearlessly that Main Street's name be changed to Affluent Way were more the rule than the exception.<sup>213</sup>

Media researchers Rivers, Peterson and Jensen opined, "Radio and television remain media that usually avoid controversy."<sup>214</sup> Researchers Sandman, Rubin and Sachsman observed:

---

<sup>211</sup> Ashdown, 12.

<sup>212</sup> Ed Routt, *Dimensions of Broadcast Editorializing* (Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Tab Books, 1974), 20.

<sup>213</sup> William A. Wood, *Electronic Journalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 65.

<sup>214</sup> William L. Rivers, Theodor Peterson, and Jay W. Hansen, *The Mass Media and Modern Society*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), 229.

When broadcasters do editorialize, they usually stick to noncontroversial topics: "Support Your Local Red Cross" and such. . . . There are significant hindrances to a strong editorial policy, but they are not the real reason most broadcasters lack such a policy. The real reason is much simpler. Strong editorials make enemies, and broadcasters will do nearly anything to avoid making enemies.<sup>215</sup>

As the 1960s approached, Mary Ann Cusack criticized the lack of editorializing by broadcasters, saying that in the ten years since the Federal Communications Commission had granted them the right to editorialize, they had failed to use the privilege.<sup>216</sup> Federal Communications Chairman John C. Doerfer had told the National Association of Broadcasters two years earlier that the unexpected shock of being allowed to editorialize, beginning in 1948, had left broadcasters too "dazed" to take advantage of their good fortune. Doerfer said, "But ten years is a long time to stand in stunned silence."<sup>217</sup>

---

<sup>215</sup> Peter M. Sandman, David M. Rubin, and David B. Sachsman, *Media, An Introductory Analysis of American Mass Communications* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1972), 243-244.

<sup>216</sup> Mary Ann Cusack, "Editorializing in Broadcasting" (Ph.D. diss., Wayne State University, 1960), 1.

<sup>217</sup> John C. Doerfer, "Editorially Speaking--A Time for Action," Address to the National Association of Broadcasters, Los Angeles: 29 April 1958, 3, cited in Cusack, 2.

Furthermore, Doerfer told the broadcasters, 173 million Americans were relying heavily on television. Eighty-three percent of American homes were equipped with television sets, even more with radio. Those numbers both grew during the 1960s as television continued to gain influence. Yet, a *Broadcasting* magazine survey the same year showed only 14 percent of the nation's television stations editorializing on a regular basis.<sup>218</sup> Doerfer had already found that only 5 percent of radio stations were editorializing.<sup>219</sup>

A brief look at contradictory attitudes within the broadcast industry of the period serves to explain some of the confusion over whether to editorialize and, if so, what form the editorials should take. The television code of the National Association of Broadcasters, published in 1959, was an echo of the FCC's Fairness Doctrine:

Controversial Public Issues:

1. Television provides a valuable forum for the expression of responsible views on public issues of a controversial nature. In keeping therewith the television broadcaster should seek out and develop with accountable individuals, groups and organizations, programs relating to controversial public issues of import to its fellow citizens; and to

---

<sup>218</sup> *Broadcasting*, "The Status of Radio-TV News," 24 February 1958, 172-175. When the wording of the frequency category of the question was expanded to "occasional," the same survey showed one-third of the nation's TV stations editorializing.

<sup>219</sup> Doerfer, "Editorially Speaking," 3.



give fair representation to opposing sides of issues which materially affect the life or welfare of a substantial segment of the public.

2. The provision of time for this purpose should be guided by the following principles:

- (a) Requests by individuals, groups or organizations for time to discuss their views on controversial public issues, should be considered on the basis of their individual merits, and in the light of the contribution which the use requested would make to the public interest, and to a well-balanced program structure.<sup>220</sup>

NAB President Harold Fellows acknowledged that, even with an NAB policy, decisions on editorial policies were difficult. Fellows told broadcasters, "radio and television stations would like to editorialize just as newspapers do but they are hindered by a lack of governmental clarification of the thorny 'equal time' issue,"<sup>221</sup> and, said Fellows, the FCC

---

<sup>220</sup> National Association of Broadcasters, *Editorializing on the Air* (Washington, DC: NAB, 1959), 40.

<sup>221</sup> Harold Fellows, "Address to the NAB," Chicago: 1959, 1, cited in Cusack, 193. The equal time clause of Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934 as amended in 1959 and 1960 did not mention broadcast editorializing. The measure provided for political candidates to have equal access to use a broadcasting station when their opponents had such access. Time given to candidates on a "bona fide newscast," in a "bona fide interview," on a "bona fide news documentary," or in "on-the-spot coverage of bona fide news events" was not deemed to be use of a station within the meaning of the Section 315. Section 315 did say, however, that nothing in the ruling was to be "construed as relieving broadcasters, in connection with the presentation of newscasts, news interviews, news documentaries, and on-the-spot news coverage of events, from the obligation imposed upon them by this chapter to operate in the public interest and to afford

had encouraged broadcasters to editorialize without giving them any clear guidelines for doing it.

Fellows added his voice to the critics of the editorial practices of some stations, remarking, "so-called editorials on some stations, however, are hardly more than public service announcements. There is a tendency in some cases to editorialize on matters that are free of controversy."<sup>222</sup>

Syndicated columnist John Crosby was no less critical of the television editorial. Writing for the *New York Herald Tribune*, Crosby said that until the 1949 reversal of the Mayflower Decision broadcasters had had no right to editorialize and since that time they had had no inclination to editorialize.<sup>223</sup> Crosby noted that from 1949 to 1958, CBS had aired three editorials.

Members of the broadcast community were also critical of their industry's editorial record as the decade of the 1960s was about to begin. Oregon Governor Robert D. Holmes, a

---

reasonable opportunity for the discussion of conflicting views on issues of public importance." Erik Barnouw, *The Image Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 353-354.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> John Crosby, "TV Finally Dares Editorials on News," *Detroit Free Press*, 10 March 1958, cited in Cusack, 201.

broadcast station management team member, assessed public opinion of his business:

What does the public feel about our profession as opinion makers, as compared, for example, to newspapers --I think we have to answer that we're considered second rate. Perhaps it would not be too extreme to say that we are not considered to have any opinions as station owners and managers. . . . It is true we sell time to buyers who have editorial opinions to express, but as people directly responsible for the operation of broadcasting facilities we do not have opinions. . . .

In the privacy of our homes, among our fellows in the industry, we venture opinions and defend our judgments. We exercise choice when we register to vote and in fact do vote; we have our religious preferences, our social likes and dislikes. . . .

But few if any of us carry over those choices and preferences into our business--which is the communication business. It is as though we--among all the other industries that make America great--led two lives; the private one, free and in the American tradition; the public one, bound and timid. . . .

The right to have opinions is ours. We are permitted by law to editorialize, to promote our ideas and to defend our judgments. But we don't do it.<sup>224</sup>

#### Network Guidance

There was little guidance from the networks for local broadcasters who dared to editorialize, no published editorial guidelines. CBS, the network of WTVJ-TV and WJXT-TV, had said in a 1954 memo to its news staff:

In news programs, there is to be no opinion or slanting. The news reporting must be straight and objective.

---

<sup>224</sup> Robert Holmes, "The Broadcasters' Duty to Editorialize," *Journal of Broadcasting* (Spring 1957): 141.

In news analysis there is to be elucidation, illumination and explanation of the facts and situation, but without bias or editorializing.

In both news and analysis, the goal of the news broadcaster or the news analyst must be objectivity. I [William S. Paley] think we all recognize that human nature is such that no newsman is entirely free from his own personal prejudices, experience, and opinions, and that accordingly, 100% objectivity may not always be possible. But the important factor is that the news broadcaster and the news analyst must have the will and the intent to be objective. That will and that intent, genuinely held and deeply instilled in him, is the best assurance of objectivity. His aim should be to make it possible for the listener to know the facts and to weigh them carefully so that he can better make up his own mind.

The foregoing was expressed by Mr. Paley in a speech at the NARTB Convention in 1954. It restates CBS policy not to engage in editorializing--a policy that has been in effect since the very birth of CBS News.<sup>225</sup>

ABC, the network of WFTV-TV, with an apparently more editorial-friendly policy, advised employees:

It is our policy to employ a staff of competent observers, representing the widest range of opinions, to comment on news developments. We determine the competency of each on a broad review of his education, and experience, keeping in view our desire to have all areas of opinion represented on our staff.

Once employed, the commentator is given the widest latitude in analysis, interpretation and expression of opinion. We have found, through years of experience that this is the best way practicable to present all sides of the complex matters that arise. We call it the Spectrum Theory, and we think it works in the interests of enlightening the widest segment of our audience.<sup>226</sup>

<sup>225</sup> Quoted in Cusack, 95-96.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 96. (In a letter from John Charles Daly, Vice President: June 27, 1958.)

NBC Editor of News Samuel M. Sharkey was clear in responding to an inquiry by researcher Mary Ann Cusack:

We do not have "regulations" to which commentators "are held in regard to the discussion of controversial news," as you put it. Our only requirement is the same as that governing all responsible news media, including newspapers and wire services; that he [the commentator] be honest and fair and that he present both sides. We do permit him, on the basis of a solid, seasoned and reasoned analysis of all facets of a situation, to present a balanced and objective report and to draw therefrom, on the basis of these assembled facts, conclusions or to point out where these elements might lead next. We do not permit our commentators to exhort the public to do thus-and-so, or not to do this-and-that; we do not tell the public what to do. We feel that a properly and fairly informed public, apprised of all aspects of a situation, can be counted on to make the proper decision. We strive to present the public with the greatest amount of information so that it can make those decisions.

And, finally, we do not have any official stand on controversy,' as you put it. We treat all news as delineated above, whether it be news of Congress or controversy or of cotton-weevils.<sup>227</sup>

### Local Stations

There was also disagreement and confusion over editorial policy among local stations across the country that editorialized as station owners and managers attempted to interpret FCC dictates. In 1958, Bertram Lebhar, Jr., executive vice president, and later owner of WEAT-TV, West Palm Beach was not a strong backer of editorializing but did

---

<sup>227</sup> Samuel M. Sharkey, Jr., Editor of News, NBC, 16 June 1958, quoted in Cusack, 96.

not want to be constrained from editorializing if he were so inclined:

In general, we agree that a station should exercise its right to editorialize, but only when the occasion arises. Since this pattern has been established with the American people for more than three decades of radio and television, I do not believe in radical changes.

There are many decent things in our life, truly worthy of support, that a television station has the opportunity of being counted, in an editorial way, by the enthusiasm of its support for these causes. Where the issue is unquestionably a controversial one, I believe that a telecaster does better by making time available to both sides of an issue, rather than attempting to force his own personal opinion on the public.<sup>228</sup>

Influencing Lebharr's philosophy was his regard for the news as another vehicle for producing income. Any unpopular editorial stands were likely to diminish that potential. In addition, much of the station's business was done on a "trade-out" basis, that is, goods or services for Lebharr and the station in return for commercial air time. Crusading editorials might have damaged those arrangements.<sup>229</sup>

There were other stations, however, with quite different editorial policies. A.J. Fletcher, president of WRAL-TV in Raleigh, North Carolina, told *Television Quarterly*:

---

<sup>228</sup> "The Editorial: TV Finds its Voice," *Television Quarterly* (Winter, 1958): 21.

<sup>229</sup> Personal recollection--the author worked at WEAT-TV in the 1960s.

Not infrequently, editorializing by a television station is the only way a community can get both sides of questions which involve public welfare. In our opinion, newspapers should not have exclusive right to the opportunity to influence public thinking for the good.<sup>230</sup>

At about the same time, Ralph Renick was making a similarly strong statement for the television editorial in *Editor and Publisher*, saying the editorial was a "natural" function of the broadcast news operation and that it was up to TV to fill the gap being left by newspapers. Furthermore, said Renick, it was the news director who should do the editorializing.<sup>231</sup> This was a year after Renick had become the first local anchor/news director to begin delivering nightly editorials. Renick's views on editorials, as well as those of Norm Davis and Joe Brechner, are more fully explored elsewhere in this dissertation.

At the end of the 1950s, those stations around the country that editorialized, both radio and television, were

---

<sup>230</sup> "The Editorial: TV Finds its Voice," *Television Quarterly* Winter, 1958): 21.

<sup>231</sup> "Radio-TV Newsmen Prod Themselves," *Editor and Publisher*, 25 October 1958, 65. Also Ashdown, 142-143. Also interviews with Renick family, 3 March 2000. Renick was an exception in this regard. Most editorials were being delivered by station management. Renick was in an unusual position in that co-owner Mitchell Wolfson, known at WTVJ-TV as "The Colonel," gave Renick complete control over the news department and the editorial function. Renick had also stated he believed the news anchor had more credibility.

getting mixed results in their editorial efforts. Following criticism of a local movie theater, radio station WKCB in Berlin, New Hampshire, had been so severely strained financially by the fight against a libel suit that it could not pay its employees.<sup>232</sup> WKCB had begun broadcasting daily editorials in November 1957. The station's editorials had charged that a local theater company was allowing young hoodlums to hang out in one of its theaters, and the youths were playing pinball machines and jukeboxes and fornicating on the premises. The station had suffered not only financial hardship. Station owner Richard B. McKee reported, "The juvenile delinquency series has brought threats of bodily harm and of death to himself [McKee] and other station personnel. On one occasion the station was invaded by a gang of hoodlums."<sup>233</sup> Nonetheless, McKee felt his editorial efforts were worthwhile, that the campaign had made his station a force in the community where there was no local newspaper and no other radio station.

The same year, a Washington, DC, radio station had a less bumpy road when it began ten-a-day editorials after a

---

<sup>232</sup> "Hectic Week for Editorializing," *Broadcasting* 54, 21 (26 May 1958): 84.

<sup>233</sup> Cusack, 181.



mother called to complain that her six-year-old daughter had been molested and that police had released the accused molester back into the neighborhood the same day on a \$2,000 bond. For three months WWDC broadcast editorials on the subject of child molesters, and then sent copies of its editorials to courts and law officers. The editorials called attention to the lax handling of child molestation cases and the release of accused offenders who would be free until they stood trial, perhaps many months later. The WWDC editorials resulted in adoption of a "get tough policy" on child molesters in the District of Columbia and only positive results for the station.<sup>234</sup>

Some television stations were also editorializing on substantial issues and taking strong stands. In Detroit, Lawrence Carino, WJBK-TV general manager, was seen regularly on editorials of substance.<sup>235</sup> In Springfield, Massachusetts, WWLP-TV President William Putnam editorialized regularly "in a crusading vein."<sup>236</sup> There were dozens of other editorialists taking stands on important issues as the 1950s

---

<sup>234</sup> "Hectic Week for Editorializing," *Broadcasting* 54, 21 (26 May 1958): 84.

<sup>235</sup> McMillin, 41.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

ended and the 1960s arrived. However, they were not "typical of the average editorial on the average station [that editorialized] on the average day. In general, TV's editorials speak more quietly, and on less controversial matters."<sup>237</sup>

Time and again the FCC sent mixed messages about editorializing to broadcasters. In its 1958 ruling in the case of WBTV-TV in Charlotte, North Carolina, the Commission condemned a WBTV editorial campaign against subscription television. Commissioners said WBTV had clearly stacked the deck against subscription television, had permitted only advocates of its own anti-subscription position to air their views, and had not fulfilled its duties under the Fairness Doctrine.<sup>238</sup> The Commission built a convincing case against WBTV, reiterated the sanctions it had threatened to use against stations that failed to adhere to the Doctrine, then recapitulated its standard for making final decisions on renewing licenses:

While this Commission and its predecessor, the Federal Radio Commission, have, from the beginning of effective radio regulation in 1927, properly considered that a licensee's overall program service is one of the primary indicia of his ability to serve the public

---

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>238</sup> Cusack, 140.

interest, actual consideration of such service has always been limited to a determination as to whether the licensee's programming, taken as a whole, demonstrates that the licensee is aware of his listening public and is willing and able to make an honest and reasonable effort to live up to such obligations. The action of the station in carrying or refusing to carry any particular program is of relevance only as the station's actions with respect to such programs fits into its overall pattern of broadcast service, and must be considered in the light of its other program activities.<sup>239</sup>

That said, the Commission reprimanded WBTW--and granted a license renewal. Commissioners had been lenient because of the station's "overall operations as a broadcast licensee," but had made it clear they were watching broadcasters who editorialized.

In her 1959 dissertation reviewing the state of broadcast editorializing, Mary Ann Cusack drew several conclusions. Cusack wrote, "It appears to this writer that it is an assumption in the first place, which must be tested, that the FCC is in a practical position to judge the editorial policy of a station."<sup>240</sup> Cusack reviewed the commonly acknowledged problem that a broadcaster may be

---

<sup>239</sup> Federal Communications Commission, *Broadcast Actions of the Federal Communications Commission* (Washington, DC: Report No. 3207, Public Notice B, 60209, 19 June 1958) 1.

<sup>240</sup> Cusack, 236.

someone with a "flute-like" voice, but little background to qualify him to offer opinion.<sup>241</sup>

Cusack found in her research that money was a source of problems for editorialists. It cost more to hire trained editorialists. Giving airtime to those with opposing views was a direct hit on the bottom line for broadcasters. Advertisers (synonymous with "income") might be offended by editorials and withdraw advertising dollars. Advertisers were likely to be identified with editorial opinion expressed on the programs they sponsored. Newspaper advertisers, on the other hand, were seldom connected, in the public view, to opinions expressed on the editorial page. Therefore, taking all these factors into consideration, it was "easy to do nothing" and "very expensive to do anything."<sup>242</sup>

Cusack wrote:

This writer concludes that the handling of the so-called controversial issues presents one of the most perplexing problems faced by the broadcasting industry today. . . . The handling of controversy on the air requires courage, social responsibility and mature

---

<sup>241</sup> Cusack, 239. In this observation, Cusack was repeating the reservations of observers she had interviewed for her dissertation. Cusack and others writing during this time period almost always referred to broadcasters, editorialists, and other journalists in the masculine.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 240.

wisdom. On the whole, broadcasters have shown a conspicuous lack of these qualities.<sup>243</sup>

Such was the atmosphere for broadcasters in the late 1950s, the 1960s, and the early 1970s. It was in a setting of mixed signals and sometimes sheer lack of trust from the Federal Communications Commission, from print journalists from their own industry, from educators, and from the public that broadcasters considering editorializing were forced to make their judgments. Broadcasters could not be certain how the Federal Communications Commission would view their editorial efforts. There was criticism of broadcast editorialists, particularly from print journalists, because of a perceived lack of intellectual depth. The bottom line was in jeopardy when broadcasters editorialized, not only from giving up air time to opposing views, but also because of the danger of offending advertisers. As Cusack stated, "The handling of controversy on the air requires courage, social responsibility and mature wisdom. On the whole, broadcasters have shown a conspicuous lack of these qualities."

In this chapter, the status of the broadcast editorial during the period under study has been examined. The impact

---

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 252-253.

of regulatory change has been explained. The approaches to editorials taken by both network and local broadcasters have been explored. These regulatory changes and attitudes of networks and other local stations in the country were part of the backdrop against which Joe Brechner, Norm Davis, and Ralph Renick delivered their own editorials. It was within a changing and unfriendly climate for broadcasters who expressed on-the-air opinion that the three editorialists chose to embark upon paths that would put them in the vanguard of their industry and their communities.

CHAPTER 7  
THE STATE OF FLORIDA AND THE U.S. IN MID-20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

Brechner, Davis, and Renick faced a number of serious pressures and issues when making decisions about editorial topics. Because two of the editorialists were so concerned with civil rights, it is necessary that the reader have a sense of civil rights background activities in Florida. To understand why what was happening in Florida is significant, it is also necessary to recall that racism was not limited to the South. Racist attitudes, in many cases, were imported from northern regions of the country. Finally, to help the reader understand the background of Norm Davis's work in Jacksonville, a brief history of consolidation attempts and governmental corruption in Jacksonville is included in this chapter.

This chapter reviews some of the events of the 1960s that would have been part of news coverage of each of the editorialists' stations. There is then an examination of civil rights activities in Florida, including activities of the Ku Klux Klan. Events in so-called civil rights

"hot-spots" in Florida are covered. The chapter concludes with the aforementioned review of Jacksonville area government.

### The 1960s in America

William Manchester, in *The Glory and the Dream*, wrote that civil rights and the Vietnam War were the two overriding issues in American life in the 1960s.<sup>244</sup> In February 1965, for instance, felony indictments against the men accused of killing three civil rights workers the year before in Mississippi had been dismissed; Confederate flags were being displayed outside the federal building in Jackson; members of the press covering the story were attacked by white Mississippi residents. It would not be until late 1967, following persistent legal maneuvering by federal investigators, that the eighteen alleged conspirators in the murders would go to trial. Seven of them would be found guilty of conspiring to violate the civil rights of the three murdered men.<sup>245</sup> It would be another three years before they

---

<sup>244</sup> William Raymond Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America* (Boston: Brown, Little, 1974).

<sup>245</sup> William Bradford Huie, *Three Lives for Mississippi* (New York: Signet Books, 1968), 150-160.



would begin serving their sentences.<sup>246</sup> Late in February, Malcolm X was assassinated. Three civil rights workers were killed during the Selma-Montgomery marches. All-white juries acquitted the accused killers of two of them. The defendant in the third murder was killed in an auto accident before his trial could be completed.<sup>247</sup>

During the 1960s, city after city was hit by violence related to the Civil Rights Movement. In Detroit, in 1967, a raid on an after-hours social club led to five days of rioting and forty-three deaths.<sup>248</sup> In Newark, New Jersey, twenty-one blacks were killed in the 1967 rioting that followed Mayor Hugh Addonizio's refusal to nominate a black man as Secretary of the Board of Education.<sup>249</sup>

Although 1967 was not the only year of violence in the country, or in the South, it was the worst of the decade. Historian William Manchester estimates the number of cities

---

<sup>246</sup> Seth Cagin and Philip Dray, *We Are Not Afraid* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1988), 452.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, Otto Kerner (Chmn.) (New York: New York Times Co., 1968), 84-108.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 57.

hit by race riots during that year at 114.<sup>250</sup> In Tampa, Florida, a young black man was shot to death by a police officer early in the summer of 1967. Two days of rioting followed.<sup>251</sup> In July of the same year, blacks in Riviera Beach, Florida, rioted to protest police brutality against a black man.<sup>252</sup> The following year, 1968, brought rioting to Miami.<sup>253</sup> Trouble had come to central Florida earlier in the decade. 1963 and 1964 were both violent years in St. Augustine.<sup>254</sup>

Mixed with daily news of civil rights issues was news of the war in Vietnam. Viet Cong troops overran Pleiku on 5 February 1965, killing eight U.S. soldiers, wounding 126, and destroying sixteen helicopters and six fixed-wing aircraft.

---

<sup>250</sup> Manchester, *Glory and the Dream* (Boston: Brown, Little, 1974), 1022-1025.

<sup>251</sup> Kerner Commission Report (New York: New York Times Co., 1968), 411.

<sup>252</sup> James W. Button, *Blacks and Social Change: Impact of the Civil Rights Movement in Southern Communities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 102.

<sup>253</sup> David R. Colburn and Jane L. Landers, eds., *The African American Heritage of Florida* (Gainesville: The University Press of Florida, 1995), 354.

<sup>254</sup> David J. Garrow (ed.), *St. Augustine, Florida, 1963-1964: Mass Protest and Racial Violence* (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, Inc., 1989).

President Johnson ordered stepped-up U.S. bombing of the north. Three days later, Viet Cong attacked a hotel being used as a U.S. Army barracks. This time, twenty-three soldiers were killed, twenty-one injured. The bombing was stepped up again, and it was to be sustained in an operation called "Rolling Thunder." On 24 March, Vietnam War protesters held a "teach-in" on the University of Michigan campus. On 9 June, for the first time, President Johnson authorized the use of United States' ground troops in Vietnam. The draft was increased. Troop commitment was increased. Because of war expenditures, the federal deficit soared. Also in June, Generals Ky and Thieu took control of the South Vietnamese government.<sup>255</sup>

Many disappointments shook the United States during the 1960s, including several assassinations of American leaders. One president's administration was cut short by a shooter in a book depository in Dallas. Another president's administration ended because of a disastrous military policy. That military policy resulted in loss of prestige on the

---

<sup>255</sup> Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream*, 1022-1025.

world stage. The country also watched as its economy went from boom to bust during the decade.<sup>256</sup>

Twenty years later, University of California at Berkeley sociology professor Todd Gitlin wrote, "[T]he genies that 'the Sixties' loosed are still abroad in the land."<sup>257</sup> In *The Sixties, Years of Hope, Days of Rage*, Gitlin, who had been an early president of Students for a Democratic Society and had helped organize the first national demonstration against the Vietnam War, described the decade as a war between the left and right, the establishment and the outsiders. The question to be answered: "Who won the war?"

Gitlin saw the sixties as a series of great successes and squandered opportunities, "unsatisfactory as this answer may ring to those who think, in Hollywood fashion, that history is either (choose one) a chorus of angels or a bummer."<sup>258</sup> Gitlin wrote that those who were part of the television industry in the sixties covered the first

---

<sup>256</sup> Robert D. Marcus, *A Brief History of the United States Since 1945* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), 213.

<sup>257</sup> Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1993,) xiv.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

presidential assassination of the television age, and,  
 "Thanks to the wonders of instant replay, drove the event."<sup>259</sup>

Another phenomenon of the 1960s, left over from the 1950s, was, according to Jerome Klinkowitz, the delivery, through late-night clear-channel radio, of African-American music from the South, "never meant for white, northern ears."<sup>260</sup> In addition, there were television's pictures of war and racial strife--pictures that would challenge the "age-old domestic notion of order."<sup>261</sup> And as early as 1965, pollster Lou Harris was reporting a disenchantment with television on the part of the American public.<sup>262</sup>

#### Civil Rights Background in Florida

Florida's civil rights background in the years before the 1960s was a violent one. It was not just the era immediately before the 1960s that included violent incidents. Violence had been a part of the racial picture in Florida for many years. Black voting numbers had been diminished in 1889

---

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 312.

<sup>260</sup> Jerome Klinkowitz, *The American 1960s, Imaginative Acts in a Decade of Change* (Ames: The Iowa State University Press, 1980), 90.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>262</sup> Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream*, 1022-1025.

by a poll tax enacted by the legislature. Because all blacks had registered as republicans, the adoption of a Democratic white primary in 1897 had further diminished their voting role. When blacks attempted to vote in the general election in November 1920 in Ocoee, violence broke out. Black citizens were beaten, their homes burned, several were killed, and hundreds were forced to leave the area.<sup>263</sup>

The issue of voting rights was not the only issue to spark racial violence in Florida. In the first seventeen years of the twentieth century, approximately ninety black men and women were lynched in Florida. Some black men were falsely accused of rape. Others were lynched simply because they had insulted a white citizen. Mob violence claimed lives in the 1920s in places such as Perry and Rosewood. Between 1918 and 1930, another fifty blacks were lynched by white mobs.<sup>264</sup>

Blacks struggled financially in the early and mid part of the century. They were kept in low-paying, mostly agricultural jobs. Some worked as truck drivers, others in

---

<sup>263</sup> Maxine D. Jones, in *The New History of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 374.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 379.

lumber mills or on the railroad as porters and waiters. Many black women left agricultural jobs to find work as domestics, personal servants, and service workers. In some parts of Florida, this race-related division of labor continued into the latter part of the century.<sup>265</sup>

In an apparent step forward for civil rights, the United States Supreme Court outlawed the all-white primary in Florida in 1944. Blacks were allowed to register as Democrats or Republicans, and the number of black voters in the state increased from 20,000 in 1944 to more than 100,000 in 1950. Nonetheless, there were still several majority-black communities with few registered black voters.

Some of the credit for increased black representation at the polls was given to Harry T. Moore of the NAACP and the Progressive Voters League. In his home county of Brevard more than 50 percent of eligible black voters were registered to vote by 1950. Moore campaigned against lynching and inhumane treatment of black prisoners and for equal salary for black teachers. He was killed when his home was bombed on Christmas day 1951.<sup>266</sup>

---

<sup>265</sup> Ibid., 379-80.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid., 375.

The black schoolteachers for whom Moore had campaigned entered the 1960s with a history of low pay and teaching in overcrowded, poorly equipped schools. Black schools closed during harvest time so young blacks could join the farm work force. White students continued to attend classes during the harvest. Parents and teachers in several Florida counties, with the help of the NAACP and the Florida Teachers Association, challenged these so-called "Strawberry Schools," and in the late 1950s the practice of closing black schools at harvest time ended.<sup>267</sup>

It was not until the late 1950s that black college students had choices beyond all-black colleges. Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Bethune-Cookman College, Florida Memorial, and Edward Waters College educated black students, but blacks and whites did not attend the same colleges. Until 1958, there were no graduate programs for black students in Florida. If a black man or woman wanted to study law or medicine or engineering, the only choice was to leave the state. In 1958, a nine-year legal battle by Virgil Hawkins, who had refused to attend law school out of state, was finally settled in Hawkins' favor when federal district

---

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., 383-384.



court Judge Dozier De Vane ordered the University of Florida to open its graduate schools to blacks. Hawkins, his long fight apparently successful, did not benefit. The university determined that he did not meet its law school admission requirements. However, another black student, George H. Starke, was admitted to the university's law school for the 1958 fall semester.<sup>268</sup>

#### Imported Attitudes

Much of Florida's racism was imported from other parts of the United States. The history of Florida is a history of immigration. As late as 1860, there were only 140,000 people in the state, and there were almost as many slaves as slave-owners. Businessmen and landowners, aware that their livelihoods depended upon enlarging the state's population, began promoting Florida as a paradise. Competition developed among Florida counties for new residents.<sup>269</sup>

Following the Civil War, Florida landowners, who had come from other parts of the country themselves, expressed discontent with the black work force in the state and began

---

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 386.

<sup>269</sup> Raymond A. Mohl and George E. Pozzetta, "From Migration to Multiculturalism: A History of Florida Immigration," in Gannon, *The New History of Florida*, 391-417.

searching for new sources of labor. Italians and Chinese especially were encouraged to migrate to Florida. Unfortunately for the immigrants, landowners had expected them to simply take the place of black slaves. When this plan did not succeed, Italians and Chinese also became the victims of discrimination.<sup>270</sup>

Foreign immigrants had some successes. For instance, Greeks found success sponge-diving in Tarpon Springs; Cubans established cigar-making industries in Key West and Tampa; and Bahamians established a "livelihood migration" providing labor to build a rapidly growing Miami. Even the immigrants who flourished economically in the United States experienced discrimination. Particularly affected by racism and dislike for outsiders were black immigrants. They were the victims of another immigrant to Florida--racism.<sup>271</sup>

The Ku Klux Klan is synonymous with racism. The beginnings of the Klan have been traced to the days just after the Civil War. The organization was disbanded in 1869 but experienced resurgence after World War I. Klan groups were "part of the communal and political life of the nation

---

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 391-394.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., 391-399.

from Maine to California."<sup>272</sup> The Klan's rebirth occurred first in Georgia with its center of power in Atlanta, but powerful Klan groups existed in Oklahoma, Colorado, Oregon, Indiana, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Maine. In some of those states, the Klan placed people in offices of power, such as governorships and U.S. Senate seats. The "Invisible Empire" was not at all invisible.<sup>273</sup>

The Klan showed its strength even in the nation's capital in 1925 when 40 thousand members paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue, but violence within its own ranks began to cost the Klan membership. The KKK, its numbers dwindling, turned its attention from Catholic and alien citizens to communism and the New Deal. Anti-semitism also became part of the Klan program.<sup>274</sup>

As World War II approached, the Ku Klux Klan experienced another decline in influence and membership. At the end of the war, Georgia dentist Samuel Green took over as the Klan's Grand Wizard, attempting to restore the group to its former robustness. Parades, cross-burnings, and floggings of blacks

---

<sup>272</sup> David M. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism, The History of the Ku Klux Klan*, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965), 1-2.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

once again became common. Even Green's leadership could not do much to revitalize the Klan, and when he died in 1949, the movement became a disorganized conglomeration of splinter groups with memberships consisting of malcontents looking for scapegoats.<sup>275</sup>

After James A. Colescott was elevated to Grand Wizard of the Klan in 1939, although he was from Atlanta, Florida became one of his frequent stops. He appeared in Tampa, Orlando, Daytona, Avon Park, and Live Oak. Klansmen in Miami threatened black voters. Colescott later told congressional probers his organization's most secure stronghold was Florida.<sup>276</sup>

Nativism, the favoring of native-born Americans over immigrants, was one of the favorite themes of the Klan.<sup>277</sup>

---

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 6-7. Although the topic is far too broad for examination in this work, the phenomenon of malcontents looking for scapegoats touches on the origins of racism. Bennett examined the motivations of racists in 1988, concluding that racism as well as nativism, and even nationalism, can be the result of feelings of powerlessness. David H. Bennett, *The Party of Fear: From Nativist Movements to the New Right in American History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1988), 1-14.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 317-320.

<sup>277</sup> The Klan did not mean the original Native Americans found on this continent by white Europeans when they arrived to begin colonization. "Native-born Americans" was a term the Klan used to refer to descendants of the white Europeans, born in North America.

Furthermore, Klan members preached that the black was the vehicle to be used by those who would promote the interests of immigrants over the native-born.<sup>278</sup>

Sidney J. Catts was an example of a fervent nativist. Catts had brought his support of nativism to Florida from Alabama in 1916. Catts abandoned his Baptist ministry to enter politics. A major part of his platform was nativism.<sup>279</sup> Catts was elected governor of the state. He used his office to widely disseminate his message of support for "the American flag, Prohibition, and the little red schoolhouse against the menace of the convent, parochial school, Rome, and Africa." It was the same message the Klan would soon preach in Florida.<sup>280</sup>

#### The Ku Klux Klan in Florida

The Ku Klux Klan in Florida had gained its strength as individual Klaverns, rather than as one statewide organization. In the 1920s, Jacksonville was home to the strongest of those Klaverns. The Stonewall Jackson No. 1 was, for a time, the largest in the state. Klansmen met

---

<sup>278</sup> Garrow, *St. Augustine*, 116-117.

<sup>279</sup> Wayne Flynt, *Cracker Messiah: Governor Sidney J. Catts of Florida* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 31-32.

<sup>280</sup> Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism*, 225.

openly, ran for political office, and the Jacksonville and Levy County fairs had special Klan days. Klaverns were growing in other areas of Florida. Chapters proliferated in Miami, West Palm Beach, Key West, Ocala, Fort Myers, Orlando, Ocoee, and elsewhere.<sup>281</sup>

The Klan was responsible for much violence in Florida. In Kissimmee, during the spring of 1923 three black men were whipped, tarred, and feathered. That same year, there was a series of floggings of black men in Tampa. At least a dozen blacks were beaten in Sumter County. In 1926 in Jacksonville, there were reports of at least sixty-three floggings. Two of the victims had died.<sup>282</sup> Michael Gannon wrote in his *Short History of Florida*, "blacks in the interior knew that at any time, for the slightest offense, real or imagined, they could be subject to physical violence, including death." Gannon also reported that Florida led the country in lynchings, with 4.5 per 10,000 blacks, at least twice the rate of any other southern state. Gangs of whites could wipe out entire black towns. Rosewood was obliterated in 1923 when seventeen blacks were slain. An entire section

---

<sup>281</sup> Ibid., 225-227; Michael Gannon, *Florida: A Short History*, (Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 1993), 86.

<sup>282</sup> Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism*, 228.

of Ocoee had suffered a similar end in 1920 when four blacks were killed.<sup>283</sup>

Klan activity in Florida continued well past the 1920s. The summer of 1951 was described as a "summer of cross burnings from Miami and Fort Myers to Jacksonville and the panhandle." Klan Grand Dragon Bill Hendrix campaigned for governor of Florida in 1951 as a way to get his message across in the face of growing resistance in Florida to the Klan. One indication of that resistance was the introduction and passage in the state legislature of an anti-mask bill.<sup>284</sup>

In 1960, the Klan was the organizer of "Ax-handle Saturday" in Jacksonville. Blacks had scheduled lunch counter sit-ins at Jacksonville department and dime stores. Members of the Florida Klan, armed with ax handles, were waiting for black demonstrators on the morning of 27 August. The Klan attacked, setting off three days of rioting between

---

<sup>283</sup> Gannon, *Florida*, 86.

<sup>284</sup> Chalmers, 340. HB No. 130 was introduced by Messrs. Melvin of Santa Rosa, Darby of Escambia, Watson of Lee, and Beasley of Walton. It was passed by the House, then by the Senate and signed by the governor on 4 May 1951. It became Florida Statute 876.11-876.21. *Florida Statutes*, State of Florida (1951), 2738-2739.

Jacksonville blacks and whites. During the same month, three black-owned businesses in Jacksonville were bombed.<sup>285</sup>

The Klan was busy in Orlando the following year. 1961 was the year lunch counter sit-ins began in the Orange County's largest city. One Klan tactic was to leave cards at targeted lunch counters with the message: "A Negro had that spoon in his mouth." A similar tactic was tried in Ocala in 1963. In 1964, the Klan played a major part in the "long hot summer" of St. Augustine. Civil rights organizer Dr. R.N. Hayling, a black dentist, was one of four men severely beaten when they were found to be observing a Klan meeting. An observer called the sheriff, who intervened in the beating and arrested four of the assailants. Juries found the Klansmen not guilty of assault and battery, but convicted the four blacks of attacking the Klansmen.<sup>286</sup>

#### A Statewide View

Occurrences in other cities in Florida were important for at least three reasons: (1) Because events in one Florida city could influence events in other Florida cities, there was concern in Orlando, Jacksonville, and Miami when disturbances were reported elsewhere; (2) because of that

---

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 353-354.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid., 368-377.



concern, two of the broadcasters who are the main subjects of this dissertation sometimes editorialized about events in other communities; and (3) in the case of St. Augustine, that community is considered part of the Jacksonville television market.

### St. Augustine

St. Augustine was among the most volatile of Florida cities in the 1960s civil rights era. A large segment of the St. Augustine business community had ties to the John Birch Society. Many of the city's leaders, even if they were not members of the Society, were reported to hold the same views as the Birchers. The business community's support of the John Birch Society also made it difficult for others in St. Augustine to accept compromise with civil rights forces in the mid-1960s and was, therefore, part of the reason the city became one of the fiercest battlegrounds of Florida's civil rights conflict in the 1960s.<sup>287</sup>

Although, before the civil rights movement of the sixties heated up, it was considered by both blacks and whites to have a generally "above average" racial atmosphere, St.

---

<sup>287</sup> David R. Colburn, "Saint Augustine and Desegregation," in *Southern Businessmen and Desegregation*, eds. Elizabeth Jacoway & David Colburn, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 214-215.

Augustine experienced some of the worst racial strife of any 1960s Florida community. Part of the reason for this apparent contradiction was that the above-average racial atmosphere was built upon a strict social structure with blacks kept "in their place."<sup>288</sup>

Black citizens made up 21 percent of the population of St. Augustine in 1950, but they held a distinctly disadvantaged position, both socially and economically. Black families averaged \$3,500 annual income in 1960. White families averaged \$5,000. Sixty percent of black women worked in domestic or service work. White children were averaging more than eleven years of education; black children were averaging only about seven and one-half years.<sup>289</sup>

Following the 1954 Brown decision by the United States Supreme Court, which outlawed so-called "separate but equal" school facilities and required desegregated schools, St. Augustine's black citizens increased their efforts for equal rights. There were sporadic lunch counter sit-ins, as well

---

<sup>288</sup> *St. Augustine, FL, 1963-1964*, David J. Garrow, ed. (Brooklyn, 1989), 11-16.

<sup>289</sup> Colburn, "St. Augustine and Desegregation," 216-218.

as demonstrations demanding integration at other facilities.<sup>290</sup>

Adding to the volatility of the racial mix, a group called the "Ancient City Hunting Club" was active in the area. The group, according to press reports of the 1960s, was no more than a front for the Ku Klux Klan. It was led by "Hoss" Manucy, who also was the reputed leader of Manucy's Raiders, a gang of racists known for violent acts against black citizens. Although the Raiders were said to number one thousand, there were never reliable reports of more than a few dozen members. Even with a limited number of followers, Manucy's reputation helped him organize anti-integration demonstrations, and St. Augustine's nonviolent citizenry feared his Raiders because of their violent acts.<sup>291</sup>

As mentioned in the previous section, one of the leaders of the demonstrations, black dentist Robert Hayling, was waylaid in 1963 by a group of Ku Klux Klansmen and severely beaten. Someone, presumably the Klan, fired shots into his home several times. His dog was killed in one of those incidents. Teenagers who took part in demonstrations organized by Hayling were jailed for four months when their

---

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., 215.

<sup>291</sup> Garrow, *St. Augustine*, 42, 97-98, 100, 103, 109, 116-117.

parents refused to pledge to keep the young people from participating in future demonstrations. Some black adults were fired from their jobs for participating in demonstrations. The wives of men involved in demonstrations were threatened with loss of their own jobs if their husbands continued to demonstrate.<sup>292</sup>

### Tampa

Tampa, unlike St. Augustine, was considered a "New South" city. While St. Augustine was proud of its heritage as the oldest city in America, Tampa's growth was recent as the decade of the 1960s began. In the 1950s, the population of Tampa had doubled. By 1960, approximately 275,000 people lived there; 47 thousand of them were black. The Chamber of Commerce was boasting that economic development in Tampa was "snowballing." The city's business owners had a bright future to protect.<sup>293</sup>

One way they attempted to protect that future was by avoiding racial strife. There had been minor incidents over

---

<sup>292</sup> Colburn, "St. Augustine and Desegregation," 216. Additional instances of civil rights conflicts in St. Augustine, as well as in other cities in Florida, are described in the chapters on the three editorialists who are the primary focus of this dissertation, particularly in the chapter on Ralph Renick.

<sup>293</sup> Steven F. Lawson, "From Sit-In to Race Riot," in *Southern Businessmen and Desegregation*, 257-260.

lack of service for blacks at department store lunch counters. One refusal of service in early 1950 had resulted in a two hour demonstration that ended in a scuffle between a black protester and a white man. That incident was enough to alert the business community and both black and white moderates that without steps to head off more problems economic disaster lay ahead. A bi-racial committee that had been formed by Tampa Mayor Julian Lane in 1959 prevailed upon store owners with lunch counters to integrate quietly. The store owners were made aware that any prolonged period of racial problems would be disastrous for Tampa's booming business climate. Black members of the committee convinced sit-in demonstrators to conduct their protests with reserve. In one instance, after several months planning, on a day when the committee and civic and business leaders had agreed that Tampa lunch counters would be integrated, fourteen pairs of blacks were served at the lunch counters of eighteen stores. They were careful to arrive at a time when there would be few white patrons in the stores, and they had been advised to "conform to norms of proper middle-class behavior." Waitresses were told by their bosses to be extra courteous to the black lunch counter patrons. Employees who were

resistant to serving blacks were given the day off. The lunch counter integration was successful--and quiet.<sup>294</sup>

However, the same problems that existed in St. Augustine and other American cities were present in Tampa. During the mid-sixties, the bi-racial committee, known at first as the Bi-Racial Committee, then as the Commission of Community Relations (CCR), implemented a program of slow, non-confrontational integration, called "the Tampa Technique." By 1967, there was little segregation left in Tampa. There was, however, still racial discrimination, enforced economically. Blacks were admitted to movie theaters and bowling alleys and lunch counters and "twenty-dollar hotels," but some black leaders charged that was no more than window-dressing. Because of lack of employment opportunities, black leaders charged, black citizens were denied access to the more expensive levels of Tampa life. Civil service examinations kept blacks from getting upper echelon jobs with the government. Even when blacks had the education and skills to perform better-paying jobs, there was de-facto resistance by white employers and whites were hired instead.<sup>295</sup>

---

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., 266-267.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid., 268-274.

Although integration appeared to be working in Tampa, blacks were dissatisfied with the pace of building low-cost housing, with the poor quality of police protection in black neighborhoods, with the shortage of recreational facilities in black areas, and with exploitation of blacks by white business owners in black neighborhoods. The "Tampa Technique" was also part of the reason for growing discontent. The slow, steady approach to integration turned out to be more slow than steady. The Commission of Community Relations was getting warnings by 1966 that discontent was growing and that Tampa stood on the threshold of the same riots that took place in Cleveland, Atlanta, and other cities. The CCR was warned in early 1967 that any gains from advances in integration and equal treatment were accruing to the black middle class and not to the poor who needed them most.<sup>296</sup>

The warnings were valid. When a white policeman fatally shot a fleeing robbery suspect in Tampa on 11 June 1967, racial tensions exploded. Rioting broke out first in an area of low income blacks, an area in which the unemployment rate was twice that of the white population, an area with decaying housing, an area where the educational level was at the Tampa

---

<sup>296</sup> Ibid., 274-275.

norm of 7.7 years for blacks. Four nights of burning, looting, and rock-throwing followed. No one was killed in the rioting, but sixteen people were injured. Damage estimates ranged as high as \$1 million. Once quiet was restored, the Commission of Community Relations began working anew with Tampa's business community and representatives from black neighborhoods to create more jobs for blacks. Business people pledged financial aid for job training and establishment of a Young Adult Council, to be made up of young blacks. However, money collected amounted to only a third of money pledged and by the end of the decade, the project had been abandoned.

### Orlando

The Orlando area also had a violent racial history. When July Perry of Ocoee, fourteen miles from Orlando, insisted on exercising his right to vote in the 1920 election in which Warren G. Harding was elected president, Perry paid with his life. Perry had gone to the polls despite "palpable . . . fear and intimations of physical violence in Ocoee."<sup>297</sup> Perry had outwitted Ku Klux Klan members in Ocoee who had set up a system by which blacks were forced to have their voter's

---

<sup>297</sup> Kathy Amich Fuqua-Cardwell, "Racial Justice: Orange County 1920-1970" (Master's thesis, Rollins College, 1992), 21.



registration validated by the town's one Justice of the Peace. When the Justice of the Peace left town early in the day to go fishing in Orlando, Perry drove to Orlando to get the required validation. He then drove back to Ocoee to vote. That is one version of the story, the black version.<sup>298</sup> The white version, reported in the *Orlando Morning Sentinel*, was that Perry had showed up at the polls with a shotgun, demanding to be allowed to vote although he had not paid a poll tax.<sup>299</sup>

There are also conflicting stories of what happened after that. The black version told of white vigilantes going to Perry's house. When a white hit Perry with the butt of a rifle, a black woman in the house fired her rifle, hitting the assailant in the arm. Gunfire erupted throughout the house and Perry was seriously wounded. He was taken to jail by the so-called "posse," while whites rampaged through the black section of Ocoee. At 3:30 the morning of November third, Perry was taken from his cell by a group of approximately one hundred whites. He was tied to the back of a car and dragged from Ocoee to Orlando. Once in Orlando, he

---

<sup>298</sup> Ibid., 21-22.

<sup>299</sup> "As Negro Houses Burned at Ocoee Great Mass of Mmunition is Exploded," *Orlando Morning Sentinel*, 4 November 1920, 1.

was hanged. The white version left out the part of the story that related Perry's torturous trip tied to the back of a car. Both versions related that his body was riddled by bullets as it swung from a tree near Lake Adair.<sup>300</sup>

Perry was not the only one to die in the election violence. The *Orlando Morning Sentinel* headlines reported that two whites were dead in the Ocoee race riot. The *Sentinel* neglected to mention in its headline that five blacks, including Perry, had also died, the blacks lives apparently not important enough to merit inclusion in the headline. The story that followed related that calmness had settled over the "battle scarred shambles," that two white men were dead, five whites had been wounded, an unknown number of Negroes in addition to Perry killed, and twenty five Negro houses, two churches and a lodge burned.<sup>301</sup> Members of the white vigilante group who had killed Perry and taken part in the rest of the violence were never prosecuted. A letter written by officers who investigated said only that Perry and another black man were troublemakers. The sheriff and his deputies who investigated were also Klan members.

---

<sup>300</sup> Fuqua-Cardwell, 24.

<sup>301</sup> "As Negro Houses Burned," 1.

After the November third incidents, the black section of town ceased to exist.<sup>302</sup>

Although there were no more reported incidents of lynchings in the Orlando area after Perry's death, life for the area's black citizens remained difficult. Schooling was inadequate. During the 1940s, there was only one high school, Jones High School. No other schools for blacks went beyond the fifth grade. A black child from Orange County who lived outside the city of Orlando and wanted to attend Jones had to room with relatives or friends in the city during the week. Textbooks were secondhand, passed along from white schools and always with racial slurs written in them by the white students who knew black children would have them next. Buses for black students did not run until 1947.<sup>303</sup>

The murder of July Perry may have been the last lynching in the Orlando area, but it was not the last racial violence. In 1944, a black man bold enough to take advantage of a Supreme Court decision declaring all-white primaries unlawful went to the polls in Orlando to cast his vote in a heretofore all white primary. He was beaten and then jailed. In July 1949, white mobs attacked blacks and burned black-owned homes

---

<sup>302</sup> Fuqua-Cardwell, 25.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid., 31-32.

in Groveland, west of Orlando, after reports that four black men had kidnapped and raped a white housewife. A vigilante group, including members of the Ku Klux Klan, captured the four accused men. One of the accused was shot to death on the spot, killed by thirty shots fired into his body. The others were found guilty by an all-white jury. One was sentenced to fifteen years in prison but shown some leniency because he was only fifteen years old. The other two, Samuel Sheppard and Walter Lee Irvin, were given the death penalty. While the manhunt and subsequent trial were going on, Groveland whites had rampaged through town, burning buildings owned by blacks. Klan members were marching openly through Groveland. Two years later, the convictions were overturned because blacks had been excluded from the jury. As Sheriff Willis McCall took the defendants Sheppard and Irvin from Raiford Prison to a jail in Tavares for retrial, McCall shot and killed Sheppard and seriously wounded Irvin. McCall claimed they had tried to escape. Irvin said McCall fired for no apparent reason. The surviving defendants were retried and again found guilty. Irvin was later executed. McCall's actions were ruled

justifiable because he had "acted in the line of duty and in defense of his own life."<sup>304</sup>

There was still little interaction among the races in Orlando in the 1950s. Black and white citizens met only long enough for blacks to perform household chores and other jobs during the day. Then blacks retreated to their own neighborhoods at night. Fuqua-Cardwell wrote in her master's thesis:

Many black households had no sewage treatment whatsoever and used outhouses. Black teachers' salaries were one-quarter the salary of white teachers. Blacks would only be treated by black doctors. Black women, choosing to deliver babies at Orange Memorial Hospital instead of at home with midwife Mary Jan Johnson, were confined to the basement of the hospital near the steampipes during labor.

For blacks no motel or hotel, except those in black neighborhoods, was open to them. Public toilets might be available but blacks had to use the ones labeled colored or not at all. The Albertson Public Library might have a good collection of books in 1954, blacks had just petitioned the city for permission to even use the library.<sup>305</sup>

Although blacks were allowed to shop at places such as McCrory's and Kress, they were required to stay within certain black areas of the stores. They could spend their

---

<sup>304</sup> Theodore Hemingway, "The Rise of Black Student Consciousness in Tallahassee and the State of Florida," in *The Civil Rights Movement in Florida and the United States*, Charles U. Smith, ed. (Tallahassee: Father and Son Publishing, Inc., 1989), 65-66; Fuqua-Cardwell, 59.

<sup>305</sup> Fuqua-Cardwell, 76.

money there, but they could not buy food or drink, or even a glass of water at the all-white lunch counter. If they wanted water, there was a separate "colored" drinking fountain. An indignity that convinced some black women not to shop in the white stores was a requirement that if they wanted to try on hats they would have to wear stocking caps to keep the hats from touching their heads. Many chose to shop at home, buying from door-to-door salesmen who charged three times as much as the department stores.<sup>306</sup> Changes were needed if blacks were to share in Orlando's booming economy and the 1960s would bring some of those changes.

#### Miami

Although considered less a bastion of racism than some other Florida cities, Miami also was the scene of racial violence as well as Klan activity. As blacks attempted to move into white neighborhoods in the mid 1940s, Klan members conducted an ongoing campaign to intimidate them. There were regular Klan parades during the latter half of the decade. Klan members burned houses, as well as crosses; they dynamited apartment complexes, hoping to frighten away black residents. Police in Miami, like other cities, were willing accomplices of white racists, enforcing invisible, but real,

---

<sup>306</sup> Ibid., 78.

color lines.<sup>307</sup> Nonetheless, the economy and the interests of business helped keep a lid on race problems in Miami. The desire for a positive business environment, which included an absence of racial strife, was effective for only so long. Although the racial violence that hit other United States cities in the sixties did not come to Miami until late in the decade, Miami was not to escape racial strife. The events that brought that strife to the city are covered in the chapter on Ralph Renick's editorials.

#### History of Consolidation Attempts in Jacksonville

When Norm Davis began his editorial campaign to uncover corruption in Jacksonville area government and to consolidate area government, he was stepping into an arena with a rich, but checkered, background. The mid-1960s was not the first time attempts had been made to bring more communities under the umbrella of a single, more organized government in the Jacksonville area. There had been earlier attempts to consolidate as well as attempts to annex neighboring communities to the city.<sup>308</sup>

---

<sup>307</sup> Gannon, *New Florida History*, 442.

<sup>308</sup> Annexation and consolidation are different forms of governmental change. Annexation involves expanding the jurisdiction of an already existing city government. Consolidation is more ambitious; it involves throwing out the

The first attempt at consolidation was made in 1868. It was a commercial consolidation rather than a political one.<sup>309</sup> A group of business-minded citizens organized a Board of Trade to consolidate not only the Jacksonville area but also all of North Florida's agricultural and commercial interests with Jacksonville as the hub. Divisions soon developed, however, as old enmities flared within a business community that was evenly divided between those who had sympathized with the North and those who had sympathized with the South during the recently concluded Civil War. Board members had political party differences as well. Some backed the Democratic Party, others the Republicans. Slowly the Republican faction became dominant; the Democratic sympathizers left the board. By 1874, the board had disbanded and consolidation was abandoned.<sup>310</sup>

Even as consolidation was failing, population growth that strained city services was taking place. Towns around Jacksonville were enjoying the benefits of living near and sending citizens to work within Jacksonville, yet were

---

old governmental structure, electing new leaders and wiping out old geographical boundaries. Martin, *Consolidation*, 2.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>310</sup> Richard A. Martin, *The City Makers* (Jacksonville: Convention Press, Inc., 1972), 97.



bearing none of the burden of supporting city services.<sup>311</sup>

In 1883, city leaders who had been floating bond issues to pay for improvements attempted to convince voters to approve annexation of several communities. It was an attempt to require citizens who were benefiting from improvements to pay for those improvements through taxes. The attempt was rejected by voters.<sup>312</sup>

In 1884, a new Board of Trade was formed under the leadership of Colonel J.J. Daniel. Daniel and other board members pushed for and won legislation that, in effect, created a consolidated municipality. Further reform in 1887 included a new state constitution that allowed for formation of a consolidated government. In a referendum to form the new consolidated government, incumbent politicians, who had been involved in scandal, were defeated, but tragedy struck the following year in the form of a yellow fever epidemic. Colonel J.J. Daniel was among the fatalities. In a front page obituary, the *Florida Times-Union* said, "Had the scourge which has carried desolation and bereavement into so many Florida homes found no other victim than Colonel Daniel, it would have inflicted an incomparable disaster upon the

---

<sup>311</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid., 6.

state."<sup>313</sup> A confused citizenry, with no justification in fact, blamed the tragedies of the plague on the new city government, and consolidation was once again a victim of circumstances. Legislation was passed in the Florida House that allowed for appointment of a City Council by the governor. The City Council was given authority to appoint the Jacksonville mayor and all other city officials.<sup>314</sup> The legislation applied only to the city of Jacksonville and would be the status quo for almost thirty years.<sup>315</sup>

In 1917 and 1919, Jacksonville's charter was amended to allow for a council-commission form of government, with commissioners assigned their own bailiwicks. The charter called for a board of five elected city commissioners who would be a group executive and responsible for actual administration of city government policy, each with his own department. The mayor-commissioner, for instance, controlled the police, fire, and building departments, as well as the

---

<sup>313</sup> *The Florida Times Union*, October 5, 1888, 1.

<sup>314</sup> Martin, *Consolidation*, 14.

<sup>315</sup> *Laws of Florida*, Chapter 3952--[No 106.] "An Act to Establish the Municipality of Jacksonville, Provide for its Government and Prescribe its Jurisdiction and Powers." Approved 16 May 1889. Section 1 of this act, which gave the Governor authority to appoint eighteen council members, and the council members authority to appoint a mayor, was an amendment to an 1887 act.

airports and the parking department. The elected City Council, on the other hand, was not to have control of specific departments but was to act as the city's legislative body. Concurrently, a Duval County government was established with five commissioners, but no council members. It was, in terms of services, duplicative of the city government. The result was two police departments, two fire departments, and two engineers--two of almost everything. The obvious waste of resources led to voter disenchantment and legislative attempts in 1918 and in 1923 to consolidate. The matter went before the voters in 1924 and was defeated.<sup>316</sup> However, with such a system in place, the possibilities for corruption and inefficiency were immense.

Those possibilities were realized when in 1931, in an action similar to what would take place three and a half decades later, the grand jury returned seventy-five indictments against city officials. Several indictments were also returned against county officials. Very little was done in the wake of the indictments, except for the annexation of South Jacksonville. However, the indictments provided the impetus for passage of an amendment to the State

---

<sup>316</sup> Ibid., 16.

Constitution, which would make consolidation possible.<sup>317</sup> The first time backers of consolidation attempted to use the amendment was 1935. Again, voters said, "No."

The need for consolidation, nonetheless, was becoming more urgent as Jacksonville and Duval County continued to grow. Population increases were staggering. Between 1930 and 1950, total population of the county and city grew by almost 170 percent, from 37,000 to 99,000 residents.<sup>318</sup> In the ten years leading up to 1963, as much as \$330 million went into construction. By 1965, companies based in Jacksonville had more than \$576 million in assets.<sup>319</sup> With the growth, came the problems of growth, problems that were being overlooked by those who were supposed to be on watch.

During this time, the City of Jacksonville was losing population; Duval County was gaining residents. In the years between 1950 and 1965, Jacksonville's population dropped by 5,000 residents to 198,000. Duval County's population rose 225 percent to more than 325,000. All of those people outside the city trying to get into town in the morning,

---

<sup>317</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>318</sup> Richard Martin, *A Quiet Revolution*, (Jacksonville: White Publishing Co., 1993), 28.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid., 32.

trying to get out at night, using Jacksonville roads, and using Jacksonville infrastructure were putting a terrible strain on the city's resources. In addition, they were putting a strain on the resources of the bedroom communities in which they lived. Those communities had not been designed as suburbs of a major city; they had been designed to handle the relatively few problems of rural areas.<sup>320</sup>

Annexation was attempted in 1963 and again in 1964, an attempt to make some of the communities surrounding Jacksonville, drawing on its resources, a tax-paying part of the city. Annexation was voted down both times because of opposition outside the city.

In the spring of 1965, the Florida Legislature, at the urging of local citizens stung by obvious government ineptitude, approved a bill creating a Study Commission to look into consolidation.<sup>321</sup> Legislators appointed seventeen members to the Commission's executive committee. Committee members elected J.J. Daniel, the grandson of the previously mentioned Colonel J.J. Daniel, as the permanent chairman. The Commission studied consolidation, held hearings in the

---

<sup>320</sup> Ibid., 39-40.

<sup>321</sup> Jules L. Wagman, *Jacksonville and Florida's First Coast*. (Northridge, Ca.: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1988), 28.

communities involved, and solicited input from the greater Jacksonville area. On 23 November 1965, the committee offered its recommendations for a sweeping change of Jacksonville government, a consolidation of city and county. This history of attempts to consolidate government in the Jacksonville area leads up to the 1967 attempt, an attempt that would be different because of different forces at work.

One of those forces was Norm Davis of WJXT-TV. Davis was facing not only a history of failed attempts at consolidation but also an entrenched power structure in Jacksonville with a strong wish to preserve the status quo. Both Davis and WJXT news director Bill Grove recalled in later years that some of the media in Jacksonville were part of that status quo, owned by the Florida East Coast Railway and the Alfred I. DuPont business structure, which was administered by Edward Ball. In 1987, the late United States Congressman Claude Pepper described Ball as part of a

greedy band of men who would go to any extreme to destroy a public official who supported Social Security, minimum wages, health care, and so on. Such people make life unbearable for millions. But they cost a little money and that made life unbearable for the insatiably greedy.<sup>322</sup>

---

<sup>322</sup> Claude Denson Pepper, *Pepper: Eyewitness to a Century* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), 206.

Florida, although a state considered part of the new South, was still in many ways part of the old South. White racist attitudes were a fact of life for blacks attempting to survive 20<sup>th</sup> century Florida. Part of the background of the racist attitudes of many Floridians was imported. It stood to reason, with so many people coming from other parts of the country where racism existed, racism would come with them.

Some Florida cities avoided racial strife for a time because city government and business leaders recognized the importance of presenting a peaceful facade. However, with a violent, repressive racial background that included much Ku Klux Klan activity, cosmetic attempts at integration would not be enough to allow the state to escape the racial turmoil that was typical of 1960s America. It was within this racial climate that Brechner and Renick undertook their civil rights editorial crusades. In so doing, they were attempting to improve their communities through their existential form of community journalism.

In Jacksonville, WJXT and Norm Davis were concerned with a different history during their editorial campaign. It was government corruption and inefficiency that required their effort during the mid-1960s. As will be explained in Chapter 9, the chapter that examines Norm Davis, it was a more

concentrated campaign, spanning fewer years than the campaigns examined in Chapters 8 and 10 on Ralph Renick and Joe Brechner. It may have also been the most demonstrably effective of any of the campaigns examined in this research. Davis and his associates faced formidable odds in attempting to change the power structure in Jacksonville, but proved themselves equal to the task.



CHAPTER 8  
RALPH RENICK--FLORIDA'S FIRST BROADCAST EDITORIALIST

It was 2 September 1957. The lanky, almost painfully thin, young newscaster with dark, slicked-back hair, studio lights reflected in his horn-rimmed glasses was calling for construction of a fire station on the Miami area island community of Key Biscayne. Ralph Renick, who had been the first television newscaster in the Miami market, was achieving another first. He was beginning the first regularly scheduled daily editorials on television in the country.<sup>323</sup> The editorial did not inspire Miami officials to immediate action; it would be ten years before the fire station would be built, but it was the precursor to editorials and editorial campaigns that would be much more successful.

Ralph Renick's editorial policies were a result of ideas formed during childhood in the Miami area and during his undergraduate years at the University of Miami. They reflected a belief that a reporter should be a contributing,

---

<sup>323</sup> S.L. Alexander, "May the Good News," 57.

participatory member of his community. His editorial crusades exemplify his dedication to community improvement, and his communitarian approach to journalism. The most notable editorial crusades involved crime, restaurant sanitation, B-girl strip joints, and civil rights.

In this section, the pioneering editorials of Renick are examined. Renick's background in the community and in broadcasting is explained, with particular attention to the editorialist's motivations. Renick's own stated views on the role of a broadcast editorialist are also explored. Finally, the editorial crusades are outlined individually.

#### The Nation's First Nightly TV Editorials

When Renick started the WTVJ editorials, he had been on the air for eight years as the station's only anchorman. He had been hired in 1949 by WTVJ President Mitchell Wolfson as a new graduate of the University of Miami's Radio-TV-Film Department. At the time he was hired, he had recently been fired by a Miami Beach FM station because of a perceived speech impediment.<sup>324</sup> The perception of Renick's boss at the Miami Beach station seemed only to confirm what Renick had

---

<sup>324</sup> Recordings of Renick's newscasts reveal there was no speech impediment. Apparently what the manager of the FM radio station heard was a tendency to mumble, a tendency Renick soon overcame.

been told by Dr. Sydney Head, the chair of the Radio-TV-Film Department at the University of Miami where Ralph attended college. Head had told Renick that the young man would never make it in broadcasting.<sup>325</sup> Wolfson heard no speech impediment, hired Renick as an intern, and the following year installed him as WTVJ news editor, news anchorman, news writer, and news film editor. Renick was the station's news department.<sup>326</sup>

Ralph Renick was well equipped for a career as a South Florida newsman and editorialist. Although he had been born in New York, he and his divorced mother and two brothers moved to Hialeah when he was twelve. At the time, Hialeah was so unsettled, Ralph and his family had to be on the lookout for rattlesnakes in the yard.<sup>327</sup> Nevertheless, the Renicks stayed and became part of the growing Miami community.

---

<sup>325</sup> Interview with Rosalie Spiedell, Ralph's mother, 11 March 2000.

<sup>326</sup> Sherry Woods, "What Keeps Renick on Top," *Miami News*, 19 January 1977, 7A.

<sup>327</sup> Neil Shister, "The Renick Regime Turns 30," *Miami Herald*, 10 November 1982, TV Section, 5. This may have been something of an exaggeration by Shister or by Renick. Renick's brothers do not now remember snakes in the yard, but they do remember seeing snakes on the way to the store.

In a revealing statement of news philosophy, Renick would say later, "I believe in growing up in a neighborhood, getting married, and raising a family there, knowing what the problems are in that community before you try to report them."<sup>328</sup> Renick was true to his philosophy. He married Betty Jane Henry, known as "Bane," in June of 1949. Ralph and Bane had six children in the next fifteen years. Ralph was left to raise them alone when Bane died in 1964, only eight months after the last of the children was born.<sup>329</sup>

By reviewing his educational pursuits, one might have also surmised that Renick would become involved in television editorializing. He had majored in radio-television-film at the University of Miami and minored in journalism. After graduation he had obtained an H.V. Kaltenborn Foundation Fellowship. The fellowship allowed him to study "the theory and practices of communicating ideas through broadcasting media or the press."<sup>330</sup> It also opened his eyes to the work

---

<sup>328</sup> Bob Michaels, "Renick, Cronkite: Parallel Goes Deeper Than Style," *Palm Beach Post*, 3 March 1981, 85.

<sup>329</sup> "Wife of TV's Ralph Renick Dies After Long Illness," *Miami Herald*, 14 June 1964.

<sup>330</sup> Fran Matera, "WTVJ, Miami: Wolfson, Renick, and 'May The Good News Be Yours,' in *Television in America: Local Station History From Across the Nation*, ed. Michael D. Murray and Donald G. Godfrey (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1997), 121.

of Kaltenborn, a brilliant and fiercely independent radio editorialist.<sup>331</sup> Kaltenborn is given credit for broadcasting the first editorial on radio on 4 April 1922. He had moved to television, working for NBC, in 1940. There he helped to pioneer television news. He had frequently expressed the view that opinion was a necessary part of delivering the news so audience members could understand the stories that made up the day's flow of information.<sup>332</sup>

It was an association that Renick would continue for fifteen years. Kaltenborn even made occasional appearances to deliver editorials on Renick's news program until the pioneer commentator died in 1965. The day after Kaltenborn's death, Renick acknowledged the influence of the old veteran on the young broadcaster's life.

There was a time in this country--as a matter of fact--around the entire world, when the voice was all powerful. . . .

These were the days of strong opinions, of vocal vibrancy, of personalities that spoke their minds and didn't care whether people agreed with them or not . . . some think it was broadcasting's finest hour. . . .

One of the men largely responsible for pioneering free expression on radio was H.V. Kaltenborn. . . .

---

<sup>331</sup> Erik Barnouw, *The Golden Web* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 135-36.

<sup>332</sup> Michael D. Murray, ed., *Encyclopedia of Television News* (Phoenix: The Oryx Press, 1999), 115.

Mr. Kaltenborn's death leaves a void in the ranks of those few men in broadcast opinionating who have achieved an emeritus ranking. . . .

If I may be permitted a personal note--it was Mr. Kaltenborn who was directly responsible for my entrance into the broadcast news profession. The year was 1949. Mr. Kaltenborn established a foundation to enable graduating college students to undertake a research investigation in the communications field. The Kaltenborn Foundation awarded me its first fellowship and I came from the University of Miami to WTVJ--Florida's first television station--to pursue my investigation of TV news. In the years since, Mr. Kaltenborn has been a steady supporter, as well as constructive critic, of my efforts in broadcasting. He was an inspiration to all of us latter day toilers in the vineyard he planted back in 1924. . . .

H.V. Kaltenborn's integrity and search for knowledge and the truth leaves a heritage for all of us to carry on.<sup>333</sup>

By the 1960s, Renick was a news institution in Miami. He had had a seven-year head start on other newscasters in town, delivering his first newscast, "The Ralph Renick Report," on 17 July 1950.<sup>334</sup> The newscast was a report of national and international news, meant to fill the needs of Miamians for news about the Korean War. Film used on the daily newscasts was at least twenty-four hours old, sent by

---

<sup>333</sup> Ralph Renick "Broadcasting Loses A Pioneer," *The Ralph Renick Report*, 15 June 1965. All editorials cited in this dissertation are on file at the Louis Wolfson Media History Center in the Miami Dade Public Library, 101 West Flagler St. and in Special Collections, University Park Library, Florida International University, both in Miami, Florida.

<sup>334</sup> S.L. Alexander, "May the Good News," 57.

air from New York. Renick's only viewing room for the film was a station restroom. It was not uninterrupted viewing. Occasionally someone had to use the restroom for purposes other than screening film.<sup>335</sup>

During the next year, "The Ralph Renick Report" expanded to fifteen minutes and included local news. As time passed, Miami City Commission meetings, the Florida State Legislature, various national conventions, Senator Estes Kefauver and his Senate Crime Investigative Committee, and Miami's bumper-to-bumper traffic all became part of WTVJ's news coverage. WTVJ bought a new mobile unit to expand coverage of Miami.<sup>336</sup>

Renick became part of the news in 1956 when he mediated fifteen meetings held in Delray Beach, just north of Miami. The meetings had been called to resolve tensions within the community over the use of public beaches by blacks. The dispute was settled with Renick's guidance, and he returned to being merely a reporter on events in his community. However, he had again demonstrated allegiance to a philosophy of the newscaster as participant in community life.<sup>337</sup>

---

<sup>335</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

<sup>337</sup> Ashdown, 56.

In 1957, Renick faced competition for the first time. NBC affiliate WCKT-TV signed on that year, followed a year later by ABC affiliate WPLG-TV.<sup>338</sup> Until 1957, Renick had had the market to himself. He had learned his craft on the air, at a time when there was no competition for viewers to turn to if he made mistakes. Renick had established himself as Miami's television newscaster and as his ratings dominance continued he would become, in the words of former ABC Miami bureau chief Ted Koppel, "a national institution in a local television market."<sup>339</sup> He had developed the stature to become the nation's first local newscaster to broadcast a nightly editorial.

#### The Renick Editorials

Ralph Renick's editorial philosophy was elucidated frequently by the editorialist himself. Paul Ashdown interviewed Renick for Ashdown's 1975 dissertation at Bowling Green State University. Renick told Ashdown he had come to understand that television editorials had more of an impact on viewers than on the subjects of those editorials:

If you're criticizing local public officials, they tend to be more responsive to the newspaper. They clip the articles, and get very excited and so forth. The

---

<sup>338</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid., 62.



newspaper editorials seem to have more effect on opinion leaders, but less effect on the public. The opinion leaders haven't yet realized the impact of television editorializing on the public.<sup>340</sup>

Renick thought the reason for acceptance of the TV editorial by the public rested squarely on the shoulders of the editorialist.

The television editorial has greater believability due to the personal endorsement of the individual delivering the comment. This person must have created confidence among his audience based on his known record of reportorial integrity. The television editorial is not an unsigned, anonymous piece.<sup>341</sup>

Renick contended that the editorial served more than just a public service function. It was also an image-builder for the station.

The editorial gives the station a personality--allows it to forcefully exhibit to its community a social consciousness. A station with an editorial is not a neuter gender merely hitching a ride on the network video cable. . . .

A broadcaster, through the editorial, can be the watchdog of the community; can aim the spotlight on corruption, graft and illicit actions of office holders and public employees. The station which fearlessly editorializes will reap great benefits in prestige, audience attractions, advertising income gains as well as being able to guide your community and accomplish good through your position of editorial leadership. . . .

---

<sup>340</sup> Ashdown, "Television and the Editorial Crusade," 1975), 71.

<sup>341</sup> Ralph Renick, Address, 13<sup>th</sup> Annual RTNDA Convention, Chicago, 16 October 1958, p.4.; cited in Ashdown, 72.

Commensurate with the responsibility to provide information is the responsibility to bring forth issues and viewpoints to the public's attention. It is at the very cornerstone of a democratic system to strive for a better informed public and television can make a contribution beyond the flow of news by bringing forth issues and viewpoints for public discussion and decision.<sup>342</sup>

Renick frequently editorialized about editorializing and was critical of government interference. In a 1963 editorial, titled "The Television Editorial," Renick told viewers:

Editorializing on television today has become an accepted practice in this nation.<sup>343</sup>

This station and this program were the first to present a continuing daily editorial. That was 1,245 editorials ago on September 2, 1957. Since we started, many, many other stations have begun airing their opinions on the air.

The F.C.C. has encouraged this practice.

Editorializing has varied with each station--but although the formula of "how-to-do-it" has differed, we don't think the practice has been terribly abused. We think it has been beneficial for the American people to have available other avenues of opinion than just newspapers and magazines.

Radio and television editorials have fulfilled an important task in stimulating individual thought and provoking action and guiding the citizenry. We believe the constitutional guarantees of freedom of the press

---

<sup>342</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>343</sup> This may not have been completely true. See the section on "State of the Editorial."

apply to editorials on television as much as to printed newspaper editorials.

We do not censor the press by government control in this country and we would fear censorship of television news and editorials. Thus we are alarmed by the announcement this week that a House Subcommittee in Washington will convene hearings on July 15<sup>th</sup> to investigate broadcast editorializing.

Many congressmen feel their political futures may be endangered by editorials critical of their performances or of their political party.

Many broadcasters today do not editorialize because they fear retaliation by those in Washington which might affect renewal of their broadcast license.

Next month's hearings will provide a further harassment of broadcasters and will certainly not encourage the furtherance of unfettered, courageous, controversial editorializing which is so badly needed in this land.

Government control, even by inference, over editorializing, is simply a form of censorship.

Censorship is not just a matter between broadcasters and the government but it is a matter which vitally affects you.

If we have the gag put over our mouths--we both choke together.<sup>344</sup>

Renick was also critical of another form of governmental control over broadcasters. Although, he frequently allotted time on *The Renick Report* for opposing views, Renick was

---

<sup>344</sup> Ralph Renick editorial, "The Television Editorial," 21 June 1963.

opposed to the Fairness Doctrine, calling it "unconstitutional."<sup>345</sup>

The role of Wometco, the owner of WTVJ, and its co-founder, Mitchell Wolfson, must not be overlooked in this research. Wolfson played an important role in the editorial successes of WTVJ-TV. As mentioned above, it was Wolfson who hired a callow Renick, then promoted him up the ladder of news. During the time covered by this dissertation, which is from the late 1950s to the early 1970s, Wolfson maintained offices for Wometco at WTVJ. He had contact with Renick on an almost daily basis. Wolfson's community participation philosophy seems to have been similar to Renick's. The *Miami News* wrote of Wolfson:

[H]is business activities pale next to his round of civic work.

---

<sup>345</sup> P. Ashdown, "Television and the Editorial Crusade, 78. Under Section 315 of the Communications Act, the Fairness Doctrine had been instituted by the FCC in 1949. The Fairness Doctrine encouraged editorializing, but required stations to provide access for opposing views on controversial issues. Lawrence W. Lichty and Malachi C. Topping, *American Broadcasting: A Source Book on the History of Radio and Television* (New York: Hastings House, 1975), 531; Erik Barnouw, *The Golden Web* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 137; Edd Routt, *Dimensions of Broadcast Editorializing* (Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Tab Books, 1974), 52; American Enterprise Institute Legislative Analyses, *Broadcast Deregulation* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1985), 15-24; Steven J. Simmons, *The Fairness Doctrine and the Media* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 16-56.

He is active, for example, in three Chambers of Commerce, a director of the Downtown Miami Business Council, a member of the Dade County Citizens Planning Board, the Budget Board, the Economic Development Council, the Orange Bowl Committee, and Opera Guild.

And they're only a few of the civic services that earned him an honorary doctor of laws degree at the University of Miami in 1955, the Greater Miami Variety Club's Good Samaritan Award in 1954, life membership in the Miami Jaycees in 1957, and the title of Miami Beach's "outstanding citizen" of 1965.<sup>346</sup>

Wolfson himself best stated his views on the role of a television station in the community and the need for TV editorials. Wolfson appeared before a House subcommittee in 1963, six years after Renick had begun nightly editorials on WTVJ. These are Wolfson's statements to the Commission, re-ordered by Flannery for contextual flow:

In every freedom there is an element of risk. We must accept the risks if we are to achieve the benefits. We must take the risk inherent in unrestricted broadcast editorials. If we dare not take that risk, we dare not let Americans think for themselves, much less, be permitted to think. We will destroy the dialogue which began when this nation began. Just as surely, we will destroy our nation.

I do not believe that the American public wants "milk and toast" editorials that just consist of subjects dealing with motherhood, the Salvation Army's needs and the like. In our free democratic society surely the public is entitled to the media's endorsement or criticism of controversial issues, whether some special interest group, a newspaper, another broadcaster, a political candidate or just plain viewers agree or disagree, provided they have an opportunity to express an opposite view.

---

<sup>346</sup> Forty Years of Service, 1925-1965" Miami News Supplement, 14 July 1965, 12.

Dull editorials have destroyed the usefulness of many newspapers; they can ruin this medium as well. The surest way to dull democracy is to dull the dialogue which points it, sharpens it, and gives it thrust and direction.

Editorials on banal topics are a disservice to everyone. Banality would be the inevitable result of further control and restriction.

The nation is seething with issues. On the national level there are questions relating to civil rights, labor, taxes, agriculture, public health and welfare, education, and the role of government. Many of these issues filter down to the local scene where, each man sees them as issues affecting his community, his way of life, his children's future.

This nation has a clear choice: to replace thought with a vacuum, or to stimulate men to think about where they have been, where they would go and how they would get there. Free expression stimulates thought. Censorship stifles it.

Favorable responses to our editorials, which have now been on the air for some six years in Miami, three and one-half years in Asheville and three years in Jacksonville [Wometco owned stations in all three markets], have been overwhelming. The general comment is "Keep up your editorials. We need them." We have been amazed at the number of people who congratulate us upon our editorials--even though they may differ with the point of view expressed.

We try to be fair, impartial and reasonable, but also positive, using good taste in our approach to community problems. Our public acceptance determines not only our integrity and reputation, but our major business philosophy that "He who serves best, profits most."<sup>347</sup>

In outlining company editorial policy to the same committee, Wolfson sounded like a textbook community journalist: "It is our policy to editorialize in order to

---

<sup>347</sup> Mitchell Wofson, Statement before the Subcommittee on Communications and Power of the House Interstate Foreign Commerce Committee, 20 September 1963. Flannery, 14-15.

give public information and receive public support for help to our communities in supporting or correcting particularly local problems and to provide our viewers with researched information which will enable them as voters and taxpayers to make constructive decisions to improve their communities."<sup>348</sup>

### The Crusades

For his 1975 dissertation, in distinguishing a "campaign" from a "crusade," Ashdown used definitions of the terms by A. Gayle Waldrop:

Crusades are directed against civic evils; they go behind facades to get at foundations; they antagonize predatory business and political interests; they challenge the apathy, irresponsibility and cowardice of citizens. They ask such questions as: Are the police efficient and honest? Is there graft among public officials? . . . Crusades attack and expose, seek to destroy practices and conditions--and to depose bosses--that make a mockery of democracy. Their goal is to give the people more direct and effective control of their own affairs.

By contrast, a "campaign" was defined as:

[E]ducational in nature, dealing with desirable cultural, governmental, and economic improvements. They may be controversial--for few phases of community life, social or economic, are not--but often they command

---

<sup>348</sup> Ibid. This is strikingly similar to the quotation from Davis Merritt in Chapter 4. Journalists should, said Merritt, attempt to "insure that Americans understand the true choices they have about issues so they can see themselves, their hopes, and their values again reflected in politics." The Wolfson statement is also similar to the statements of other community journalists quoted in Chapter 4.

unanimous Rotary Club cheers. Their objectives may be traffic safety, a new high school or city hall or library, diversified agriculture, diversified industry, city and county zoning, parks, an expanded recreational program, a city-manager form of government.<sup>349</sup>

Ashdown identified only two "crusades" in his dissertation.<sup>350</sup> One was a group of seventy-three editorials that hammered at the problems of crime and governmental corruption in Miami. Sixty-five of the seventy-three editorials were broadcast on successive nights. The other "crusade" involved twelve weeks, one night a week, of editorials that focused on unsanitary conditions in Miami restaurants. It was a limited definition of "crusade" that narrowed the focus.

If Ashdown had not used Waldrop's narrow definition, he would likely have allowed editorials for civil rights and the rights of Cuban refugees. Had he not limited his study to the years 1965-1973, he could have included an earlier series of editorials against "B-girl strip joints." In fact, in laying groundwork for his study, Ashdown later refers to the "B girl" editorials as a "crusade," when he quotes Renick:

We took off after the joints, the B-Girls, stripteasers --pointing out that teenagers can be seen in pinball

---

<sup>349</sup> A. Gayle Waldrop, *Editor and Editorial Writer* (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc. 1948), 423.

<sup>350</sup> Ashdown, 95.



arcades, a violation of the law; bookmakers work openly along the streets; minors have no difficulty in buying liquor in stores or in being sold drinks; perverts congregate in certain places; drunks, vagrants and derelicts all roam at will.<sup>351</sup>

TV Guide also referred to the B-Girl Editorials as a "crusade:"

Last September the Federal Bureau of Investigation revealed that Miami ranked second to Los Angeles in the national crime rate. Miami police officials shrugged off the FBI report, blaming the city's crime on the annual influx of vacationers. But WTVJ presented two documentaries in an attempt to prove that most of Miami's crime could be traced directly to the city's honky-tonk districts, specifically the striptease joints. Renick sustained the crusade with a series of editorials. As a direct result of WTVJ's campaign, Miami's city commission passed three new ordinances, including a ban on stripteasing.<sup>352</sup>

#### The "B-Girl" Editorials

The striptease editorials were not presented on a nightly basis, but they were frequent for a period of several years. Renick had not finished with the so-called "honky-tonk" business interests in town with his 1959 success, described above. In early 1960, after giving a strip-club owner time for an editorial reply, Renick criticized a Miami

---

<sup>351</sup> Ralph Renick statement to the FCC, Washington, DC, Docket number 12782 (15 December 1959).

<sup>352</sup> "Television Raises Its Voice," TV Guide, 23 April 1960, 5.

City Commission vote to water down a striptease ordinance.<sup>353</sup> Renick kept up the pressure in an editorial on 29 January 1960, reporting that the WTVJ FYI special in September 1959 had brought further charges of gambling and indecent performances at the Gaiety Club on Biscayne Boulevard.<sup>354</sup>

The heat continued in February and March. Renick editorialized on strip club customers' use of credit cards. The clubs, said Renick, were allowing patrons to run up big credit card bills. Renick warned that the credit card companies were getting so many complaints they might pull out of business arrangements with the clubs.<sup>355</sup> One week later, Renick's editorial included Police Chief Walter Headley's comments on the "hundreds" of arrests for violations of the liquor laws in the clubs. In this editorial, Renick tied the continuing crackdown on the clubs to WTVJ specials on honky tonk establishments in 1959.<sup>356</sup>

---

<sup>353</sup> Ralph Renick, "Striptease Ordinance Stripped," *The Ralph Renick Report*, 20 January 1960.

<sup>354</sup> Ralph Renick, "Honky Tonk Crackdown Continues," *Ralph Renick Report*, 29 January 1960.

<sup>355</sup> Ralph Renick, "B-Girl Joints Like 'Charge-It' Business," *Ralph Renick Report*, 5 February 1960.

<sup>356</sup> Ralph Renick, "Police Chief Headley Comments on Honky-Tonk Cleanup Campaign," *Ralph Renick Report*, 9 February 1960.

The Gaiety Club, the Suburban Club, the Club Paree, the French Casino, Cuban Village, and others were all ordered to appear before the city commission in March 1960 to explain their ownership. Renick related in an editorial that profits were being made by selling club licenses to criminals who could not have obtained them if they had been the original applicants. In the editorial, Mayor Robert King High appeared on film to make the announcement of the crackdown.<sup>357</sup>

In July 1960 Renick would again turn his attention to strip joints. Renick approvingly told his viewers forty agents of the State Beverage Commission, working with the Greater Miami Crime Commission, had raided several strip joints, charging owners with liquor violations. The intent was to use the charges to take away the clubs' liquor licenses.<sup>358</sup> After this editorial, Renick moved on, mentioning the topic only a few more times. Much of his editorial light would now be shone on the problems of crime in Miami, on the Cuban crisis, on civil rights, and, for several weeks, on unsanitary restaurants.

---

<sup>357</sup> Ralph Renick, "The Heat's Really On for Strip-Joint Owners," *Ralph Renick Report*, 11 March 1960.

<sup>358</sup> Ralph Renick, "Honky Tonk Crackdown Continues," 22 July 1960.

### The Restaurant Crusade

Although the dates of this campaign fall outside the 1960s period of investigation for the other two editorialists examined in this dissertation, it is included here, as is some of the 1950s work of Ralph Renick, because it is illustrative of his editorial approach. Because Renick editorialized earlier, longer, and later than the other two primary subjects of this work, it would be an oversight to limit examination of his editorials to the 1960s alone.

Another crusade, "Not on the Menu," began in March 1973. The crusade consisted of nightly news reports for twelve weeks, five nights a week at six and eleven o'clock and included once a week editorials. A WTVJ reporter and cameraman accompanied Dade County Health Department inspectors as they made routine inspections of Miami restaurants. Not all restaurant owners were cooperative; some refused the camera crew entry. In those instances, the reporter interviewed health inspectors after they had examined conditions inside the restaurants.<sup>359</sup>

The first report centered on a Lincoln Road mall cafeteria in Miami Beach. Inspectors had found stagnant water, filthy floors and equipment, and both dead and live

---

<sup>359</sup> Ashdown, 122.

mice. Renick editorialized that because health officials could issue citations, but were powerless to clean up restaurants, public exposure (on WTVJ) was the way to force restaurants to correct sanitation and health problems.<sup>360</sup> Two weeks later, Renick editorialized that much of what had been found in Miami area restaurants was filth. He also revealed that the Florida Restaurant Association had told its members not to allow TV cameras into their restaurants and not to talk to the press. Renick interpreted the reaction as an indication his crusade was working:

The defensive response by the Restaurant Association is one more indication that behind many restaurant kitchen doors there is indeed something to hide. . . . The series is producing positive results. Health inspectors say that suddenly they have gained cooperation from restaurants in voluntarily bringing their premises up to standards.<sup>361</sup>

In the third week of the restaurant campaign, Renick noted there had been some cancellations of advertising as a result of the series of reports and editorials. Renick devoted one editorial segment to letters from viewers. Most of them were complimentary, but one viewer said:

There can be no argument against cleaning up kitchens of dining places, but it's the manner you people went about it. If I were one of your victims, I would have broken

---

<sup>360</sup> Ralph Renick, "The Reason Why," 28 March 1973.

<sup>361</sup> Ralph Renick, "Beyond the Kitchen Door," 6 April 1973.

your camera even if I went to jail for it. Some of those owners have worked hard to get where they are and have a large investment. In football language, what you are doing is a cheap shot. May the prosperity of your business be just a bit in the red.<sup>362</sup>

There was additional reaction to the Renick restaurant editorials. John D. Eckhoff of the Dade County Department of Public Health told the *Miami News* it was now clear some restaurants in Dade County were re-serving food that had been left on diners' plates.<sup>363</sup> That, too, was meat for a Renick editorial:

As we enter the fourth week of our series "Not On The Menu," we are convinced that there "ought to be a law." . . . We are told that some restaurants have repeatedly been in violation of the same provisions of the State Sanitary Code for years . . . they have been warned and issued citations for violations..but have simply not responded to the Health Department inspectors. The reason is simple. The inspectors have no club in their closet. They cannot close a restaurant which refuses to comply with standards. . . . If the danger to public health is pronounced and where the restaurant does not take necessary steps to comply with regulations for the protection of the customers' health--then the doors of the establishment should be closed. . . . Let Dade County government set the pace and authorize a "Restaurant Standards Act" with penalties for non-compliance.<sup>364</sup>

---

<sup>362</sup> Ralph Renick, "Viewers Speak on Channel Four's Restaurant Series," 12 April 1973.

<sup>363</sup> Alex Ben Block, "Taking Notice," *Miami News*, 13 April 1973, 15.

<sup>364</sup> Ralph Renick, "There Ought To Be A Law," 16 April 1973.

Four days later, Renick was able to report that a county commissioner would soon introduce new standards for Miami area restaurants, and on 24 April the Miami Beach Taxpayers' Association passed a resolution thanking Renick for his restaurant crusade.<sup>365</sup>

On 9 May, Restaurant Association members met in Miami with the intent of taking steps to improve the image of the restaurant industry. Renick noted in an editorial that night it was about time:

We have thought all along that such a trade group would perform a better service to its members if it emphasized the positive . . . in other words . . . tell its members to get with it . . . to clean up . . . to meet health standards. It's taken seven weeks . . . but at last the message is getting through.<sup>366</sup>

The restaurateurs' meeting had not been called because the message of the editorials was getting through. It had been called to blame the editorials for falling receipts. Miami News reporter Al Volker wrote that the meeting centered mainly on criticism of WTVJ and reporter Bob Mayer, who had been the reporter assigned to most of the restaurant coverage. Mayer had even been invited to speak to the group, which he did. He was not well received. The meeting was also

---

<sup>365</sup> Ashdown, 125.

<sup>366</sup> Ralph Renick "The Message Finally Gets Through," 9 May 1973.

covered by the Miami Herald.<sup>367</sup> Renick responded in an editorial the next night:

The meeting degenerated into a name-calling session. This reporter and correspondent Bob Mayer were accused of "irresponsible reporting." Other derogatory remarks were made against us and WTVJ. We choose not to respond in kind. . . . We have repeatedly made available to Mr. Robinson the opportunity to have his say on this program. He has refused or made impossible demands.<sup>368</sup>

The editorials were not only having an effect on business, they were being noticed by people in a position to force changes. As the squabbles between restaurant owners and the WTVJ crusaders went on, a Miami city commissioner proposed an ordinance to give the city's health department powers to shut down a restaurant found to be serving food from a dirty kitchen.<sup>369</sup>

As the restaurant crusade neared its successful end, John D. Eckhoff of the Dade County Department of Public Health wrote WTVJ:

Eight weeks ago when the Ralph Renick Report introduced the news feature "Not On The Menu," we expected a flurry of public interest that would soon vanish. However,

---

<sup>367</sup> Al Volker, "Restaurateurs: Publicity hurts," *Miami News*, 15 May 1973, 1A. Darrell Eiland, "Restaurant Business Slumps," *Miami Herald*, 15 May 1973, 2B.

<sup>368</sup> Ralph Renick, "The Restaurant Men Who Can't Stand the Heat--Should Stay in Their Kitchens," 16 May 1973.

<sup>369</sup> Sam Jacobs, "Goldberg Would Strengthen Law on Dirty Restaurants," *Miami Herald*, 12 May 1973, 2B.



just the opposite has been true. Many citizens have continued to write and call in support of our efforts, as highlighted by this program, to upgrade sanitation in restaurants failing to meet required standards. In our opinion this series has been of outstanding value to the community for it has not been spawned from a desire for sensationalism but is a product of sound factual reporting. It has taken courage and integrity to publicly tell this story which was offensive at times to select advertisers.

It is our pleasure to acknowledge this support that Channel 4 has rallied from the public, government and many in the restaurant industry, to aid us in resolving a vital public health problem.<sup>370</sup>

There were also kudos for the WTVJ restaurant editorials from the Florida State Senate, the Dade County Board of Commissioners, and two Miami radio stations, but resentment among some Miami restaurateurs continued.<sup>371</sup> Renick acknowledged WTVJ's satisfaction with a new restaurant ordinance passed by the Metro Commission but lamented that at least one hotel had become a dangerous place for WTVJ employees:

[T]he sweetness of that reward [the new restaurant ordinance] was marred by the irrational act of a hotel official who decided to resort to violence against our correspondent Bob Mayer and cameraman Warren Jones. Such an act cannot go unheeded. Charges of assault and battery have been filed. . . . Obviously there is still some serious misunderstanding about what we are trying

---

<sup>370</sup> Correspondence from John D. Eckhoff to WTVJ, quoted in Ashdown, 128.

<sup>371</sup> Ashdown, 128.

to accomplish with this type of reporting. It has simply been to expose a problem.<sup>372</sup>

One of the factors Mayer remembered best about the restaurant crusade was support from WTVJ management. Mayer told Renick in correspondence that, despite almost daily threats from the restaurant industry of advertising losses and lawsuits, neither the sales department nor the legal department had wavered. Despite great pressures, the word on restaurant reporting had never been anything but "go ahead."<sup>373</sup>

WTVJ's advertising department seized the opportunity to praise the station's news department when it placed an advertisement in the August 1973 issue of *Broadcasting*.

It was a well-kept secret. Many Miami restaurants had unsanitary kitchens. Some kitchens even had bugs (the old fashioned-kind). Miami's health department was stymied. There was no law on the books giving them the authority to close dirty restaurants. Then on the night of March 26 we turned on the heat. On our 6 p.m. Ralph Renick Report, the #1 news program in the Miami market, we ran a report called "Not on the Menu." It was the first of a series of filmed reports showing actual unsanitary kitchens. Other reports and other kitchens followed. Night after night, for 3 months, on both our 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. news reports. "There out to be a law," we said. Others joined the fight. Others joined the fight. Local government sat up and took notice. Civic leaders spoke out. The guy

---

<sup>372</sup> Ralph Renick, "An Unfortunate Misunderstanding," 8 June 1973.

<sup>373</sup> Ashdown, 130.

in the street got teed off. And we were swamped with approving letters from the whole community. Finally, on June 5, a tough sanitation law was passed giving health inspectors the authority to close restaurants having dangerous sanitary violations. Sure, we caught some flack along the way, especially since ours is a resort community. But we figure if you're the number one station in the community you should have broad shoulders.<sup>374</sup>

A separate story in the same issue of *Broadcasting* noted that WTVJ's investigators had been given credit for cleaning up Miami area restaurants when regular restaurant inspectors could not do it because of a lack of "manpower."<sup>375</sup>

When it was over, the WTVJ restaurant crusade had resulted in the closings of 180 eating places for sanitary violations.<sup>376</sup>

### The Crime Crusade

Crime filled Renick's editorial time more than any other topic. Both Ashdown and Flannery state that, with the exception of only two years, crime was the most often visited subject.<sup>377</sup> The crime crusade began in 1959. Renick was to

---

<sup>374</sup> "Miami's Restaurants Were Bugged Until We Blew the Whistle," *Broadcasting*, 20 August 1973, 42.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>376</sup> Richard K. Doan, "When Making Ends Meet Is Such a Problem," *TV Guide*, 22-28 March 1975, 6.

<sup>377</sup> Ashdown, "Editorial Crusade," 93; Flannery, "A Case Study," 37.

say in a 1966 editorial that 1959 was when he and his staff had begun researching crime in the area in anticipation of one day beginning an all-out editorial assault on the problem.<sup>378</sup> By mid 1967, the Renick crime editorials were being noticed. As Paul Einstein wrote in *Quill*:

Constant editorial pounding...surveillance film taken by hidden cameras and special crime documentaries, even live interviews with rackets figures--every weapon in the arsenal of television news was brought to bear in the station's hard-hitting, no-holds-barred campaign against organized crime.<sup>379</sup>

Renick was picking up a campaign begun by reporter Hank Messick of the *Miami Herald*. Messick had reported on charges that Sheriff Talmadge Buchanan had accepted an illegal \$25,000 campaign contribution, then lied about it under oath. Buchanan had been acquitted on the charges, but Messick had continued to report, using information from chief prosecution witness in the case, Roy O' Nan. When the *Herald* backed off because of fear of libel suits, Renick, with a longstanding interest in the subject of crime in Miami, was willing to pick up the story. Renick used information from Messick as well as from O' Nan.<sup>380</sup> It was O' Nan who would provide the

---

<sup>378</sup> Ralph Renick, "Act Now or Surrender," 13 September 1966.

<sup>379</sup> Paul Einstein, "Camera on Corruption," *The Quill*, May 1967, 12.

<sup>380</sup> Ashdown, 109.

bulk of Renick's information for the story.<sup>381</sup> Messick would write later:

The campaign entered a new phase. . . . Ralph Renick . . . took up the slack. A tall, handsome television pioneer, Renick had taken a few swings at conditions over the years and was ready to try again. . . . Waiting and eager to help was that nationally known bagman, Roy O' Nan.

Apparently a little unsure of how far to trust Roy, Renick asked my aid. The *Herald's* attorneys had just rejected a news series I had prepared. I was annoyed. Television would give me a chance to bring the material to the public and, at the same time, prove how baseless were the attorney's fears. I agreed to appear in person with my new evidence.

The thirty-minute special starring Messick and O' Nan had tremendous impact. It also had unexpected consequences. Suddenly I was a celebrity. After writing scores of articles for months, it was rather humbling to become famous after one TV exposure.<sup>382</sup>

Messick was reluctant to take advantage of his celebrity status. He was getting requests to appear on radio, as well as TV, and had little time to dig up new information. The *Herald*, however, was showing no enthusiasm for Messick's investigation. He decided, "Things needed saying. If I couldn't write them, I would speak them." He would speak them with Renick's help. "Renick, meanwhile, kept up the pressure. Waving the banner the *Herald* had

---

<sup>381</sup> Ironically, 21 years earlier, O' Nan had hired Renick to work in his drugstore.

<sup>382</sup> Hank Messick, *Syndicate in the Sun* (New York: McMillan, 1968), 219.

dropped, he nightly presented shocking facts topped with lucid hard-hitting editorials."<sup>383</sup>

With Renick's help, Messick and O'Nan revealed a web of crime in Miami involving city and county officials. Messick complained he had written "perhaps a hundred stories in the *Miami Herald*" spotlighting crime in the area, yet no one had become indignant, no one had done anything about it. He called the crime situation in the area a "swamp" and a "morass." He charged there was an attempt to intentionally block reform, to maintain the status quo.<sup>384</sup>

As the program concluded, Renick commented:

People who hold honest jobs . . . and who worry about things like paying the mortgage and buying shoes for the children . . . are easily fooled by corrupt officials. The unsophisticated average citizen thinks of a criminal as a hoodlum character with a gun who hides in the shadows.

He finds it impossible to believe that the man wearing a badge or holding a high public office can be just as dishonest as a racketeer. This naive attitude on the part of many serves to protect the lawbreaker who hides behind the shield of decency. In Dade County . . . as in other areas across the nation..the bribe is fast replacing the bullet as the ultimate criminal weapon. . . . There are those . . . even in the local news media who are gullible enough to believe that corruption in Dade County is not as widespread as O'Nan says it is.<sup>385</sup>

---

<sup>383</sup> Ibid., 220.

<sup>384</sup> WTVJ-TV, "The Price of Corruption," 6 September 1966.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

The Renick crime crusades drew criticism, even from within the ranks of local broadcasters. WCKT-TV's main anchor, Wayne Farris, accused Renick of paying O'Nan for O'Nan's participation in the Renick programs. Renick denied it.<sup>386</sup> Jack Roberts wrote in the *Miami News*:

The electronic boys are madder than the dickens because Channel Four's Ralph Renick has scooped them by putting O'Nan on TV. Channel Seven's Wayne Farris responded with a slashing attack on O'Nan, the implication being that his competitor, Renick, had performed a public disservice by putting the bagman on the air. Channel Ten [WPLG] keeps coming up with little editorials which attack "a local television station" using words such as "ludicrous" and calling for a blue ribbon grand jury, whatever that might be.<sup>387</sup>

In *Syndicate in the Sun*, Messick recalled that both he and Renick had come under fire from other broadcasters who attempted to denigrate the Renick effort by taking Buchanan's side:

Rival TV commentators began to scream--and to fire back with pro-Buchanan editorials. Even the late night radio "talk" shows got into the battle. Most were anti-Messick, anti-Renick. Buchanan was live on one or the other almost every night. . . . [A]nti-Renick television announcers gave him free space. In public speeches he assailed Messick first and Renick second. It was all a communist conspiracy, he repeated, designed to deprive the little man of his right to vote.<sup>388</sup>

---

<sup>386</sup> Ashdown, 112.

<sup>387</sup> Jack Roberts, "The Carpers," *Miami News*, 16 September 1966, 3A.

<sup>388</sup> Messick, *Syndicate*, 220-224.

In November 1966, Renick included in his nightly editorial the contents of an article in a police publication by Executive Assistant to the Dade Sheriff L.M. McNutt. McNutt was clearly unhappy with the Renick anticrime crusade:

For the past twenty years an illegitimate group has grown up in our midst. Many of these people speak sedition with every word. They appear bent on usurpation of power and control of all our government offices. The power is in the hands of a ruthless group with ambitious desires, who are vindictive in nature and through their evil genius they have managed the press, which in its blind obedience has slanted its news to satisfy the group's interests. They have prefabricated a corrupt police situation that does not exist. The police are constantly being held up to scorn by those who would like to see this nation fall. Those who wish the police ill--many of whom are native Dade Countians--have polished editors and television orators who constantly attack the honor and integrity of the police. The problem of enlightening the public is great--not because the people are unable to understand, but because of the difficulty of reaching them in time with the true story because of the thought controlling machine of this force, TV, Radio, press.<sup>389</sup>

Renick then commented that McNutt did a disservice to other police officers who had a more reasoned approach to WTVJ's comments on crime in Miami.<sup>390</sup>

Perhaps unintentionally, Renick had an effect on the 1966 governor's race in Florida. Miami Mayor Robert King High was the Democratic candidate, running against Republican

---

<sup>389</sup> Ralph Renick, "What Are You Saying, Chief McNutt?," 17 November 1966.

<sup>390</sup> Ibid.



Claude Kirk. By association, the Miami mayor had taken much of the heat of the WTVJ anticrime crusade. Kirk commented during the campaign that he would, as governor, call High to Tallahassee to order him to clean up the state's largest city. Four days before the election, indictments were handed down against Sheriff Buchanan and an alleged bagman on charges of conspiring to commit bribery, burglary, and grand larceny charges against the head of the police division, prostitution charges against two police sergeants, and perjury charges against a Miami constable. The grand jury reported it had found even more corruption than was indicated in the reports that brought about the investigation. Claude Kirk won the election. His first official meeting was with Renick to talk about crime.<sup>391</sup>

There was no clear indication that the Renick anticrime crusade had contributed to a diminution of crime in the Miami area. Hank Messick, who was subsequently hired to head a private agency to act against the "criminal element" as part of Governor Kirk's "War on Crime," quit, saying a "cruel hoax [the Kirk anticrime war] is being perpetrated on the people of Florida."<sup>392</sup> A review in the New York Times of Messick's

---

<sup>391</sup> Ashdown, 117-118.

<sup>392</sup> Renick, "What Is the Hoax?," 16 February 1967.

book on Miami crime painted a picture of continuing troubles in Miami, even after the Renick editorial crusade:

Perhaps the most significant thing in the new work is the concise delineation of how entrenched racketeering has flourished because of public indifference to official corruption and how, after the public became aroused at last, reform became a political football that seems, even today, to be missing what should be the legitimate goal posts of genuine reform.<sup>393</sup>

#### Renick and Civil Rights

There has been little written on the Renick civil rights editorials, but examination of the files at the Wolfson Media Center in the Miami Dade Public Library shows the subject was visited frequently. It has already been noted above that Renick helped settle a civil rights dispute in Delray Beach in 1956, and when the WTVJ anchorman started editorializing, civil rights was among his early topics, a fact noted in the *Miami News*:

Two weeks ago we noted that Ralph Renick . . . had instituted a brief editorial at the tail end of his nightly news show. We commended Ralph's motives, but doubted his courage to speak out on controversial issues. But we were stunned--and delighted--last Monday when Ralph came face to face with the segregation issue and decided not to duck.<sup>394</sup>

---

<sup>393</sup> Charles Gruzner, "End Papers," *New York Times*, 13 April 1968, 23.

<sup>394</sup> *The Television Editorial*, booklet published by WTVJ-TV, March 1958.

The decision "not to duck" came despite Renick's own reluctance to declare himself a civil rights campaigner. Writing in the *Miami News* less than two weeks before the *News* lauded Renick for his stand on the segregation issue, Arthur Grace noted that Renick had begun delivering editorials somewhat cautiously:

While personal comment on television may not be unique, it is rare. The industry lives in unholy terror that it might one day offend a viewer. . . . Renick is very much aware of the influence he can wield in this community. He did not take this step lightly. The management of the station wanted him to start a daily editorial two months ago; he insisted on waiting until he was absolutely certain of his ground.<sup>395</sup>

Renick, quoted in the same article, did not appear to be so "sure of his ground." He was still formulating his editorial policies:

"When it comes to controversy, I just don't know," he said. "That's an unanswerable question right now. I do know that I'm not going to back political candidates. I'm certainly not going to jeopardize everything we've built up over the past eight years by going off half-cocked. . . . I'm not going to start putting Renick on the screen as a controversial figure," he continued. "I've been at this job for eight years and I feel I have certain qualifications for editorializing. . . . Many people live in a vacuum when it comes to forming opinions. I have the chance to jump in and help them make up their minds. It is not a responsibility to be taken lightly."<sup>396</sup>

---

<sup>395</sup> Arthur Grace, "Renick Takes A big Step Without Any Controversy," *Miami News*, 9 September 1957, 12A.

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*

Grace finished his article, commenting, "It will be interesting to see how Ralph bears up under this great burden."<sup>397</sup>

It took several months, but Renick's civil rights editorializing was also commended in the *New York Herald Tribune*:

I saw a kinescope of one such editorial severely criticizing a southern judge for meting out a life sentence to a Negro who had choked and robbed a white woman. "Dark Ages of the South," declared Mr. Renick in his editorial. "Frontier Justice"--again strong words for the South.<sup>398</sup>

Just as another of the journalists featured in this work was doing in the 1960s, Renick frequently aimed his editorial ire at hate groups.<sup>399</sup> After swastikas were painted on synagogues in Jacksonville, Tampa, and Miami, Renick said:

Who committed these outrages is not known. Most likely their identities will never be known, for people of this stripe are sneaks and cowards--they do their filthy deeds fitfully and under the protective cloak of darkness.

Governor Collins today reflected the sentiments of the people of this state when he called the incidents "despicable." But even this description does not do justice to the kind of demented hatred and twisted sickness which would desecrate houses of worship and

---

<sup>397</sup> Ibid.

<sup>398</sup> John Crosby, "TV Stations with Opinions," *New York Herald Tribune*, 9 March 1958, Sec.4, 1, cited in Ashdown, 66.

<sup>399</sup> Joe Brechner's editorials on Orlando television station WFTV-TV will be examined in later pages.

smear the most contemptible hatred imaginable with a paintbrush. Law enforcement agencies should show no quarter in flushing out and bringing to justice those responsible. In these cases it is the whole of society which is threatened and disgraced--not just one race or religion.<sup>400</sup>

### Jacksonville

Although usually concerned with Miami matters, Renick occasionally turned his attention to other Florida cities. When racial violence hit Jacksonville in 1960, Renick called for action to create a bi-racial committee similar to Miami's:

In many southern cities, including Miami, the threat of violence was diminished when leaders made up their minds to face the problem realistically and in good faith.

Bi-racial committees have helped. . . .

Mayor Burns of Jacksonville, despite the pleas of business interests and the city's Ministerial Alliance, persistently refuses to form a bi-racial committee. He says such committees "invariably result in decisions to integrate."

The mayor, in a way, is abdicating decision making to angry mobs.

Unless the political and community leaders of any city open the way for communication between responsible members of both races, the problem will continue to simmer like a volcano, ready to erupt in violence with little provocation.<sup>401</sup>

---

<sup>400</sup> Ralph Renick, "No Encouragement for Swastika Crackpots," 7 January 1960.

<sup>401</sup> Ralph Renick, "Bi-Racial Committees Can Help Prevent Mob Warfare," 30 August 1960. Renick's motivation for editorializing about Jacksonville and other cities outside the Miami area was apparently similar to the motivation of Joe Brechner (discussed further in a later chapter), who used reports of racial strife in other cities as a means to warn

The incident that had motivated Renick to editorialize on another Florida city occurred on 27 August 1960 when clashes broke out between blacks and whites after ten days of sit-ins at two downtown Jacksonville stores. A hair-pulling scuffle between a black woman and a white woman on the 26 August was the apparent spark that touched off the escalated violence of the twenty-seventh. Bands of blacks and whites roamed the streets of the city, looking for trouble. A crowd of three thousand had to be broken up by police armed with shotguns. Fifty people were reported injured and more than one hundred arrested.<sup>402</sup>

Renick's warning that, without attempts at a bi-racial solution, "the problem will continue to simmer like a volcano, ready to erupt in violence with little provocation" was valid. On 23 March 1964, racial trouble broke out again in Jacksonville, this time with more tragic result. There had been two weeks of restaurant and hotel sit-ins. Police moved in to break up a demonstration of blacks in a

---

that, unless steps were taken to improve race relations, the same kind of trouble hitting other cities could develop close to home. Renick was also accustomed to commenting on topics outside the Miami area, even including some editorials on international affairs.

<sup>402</sup> Lester A. Sobel, ed., *Civil Rights 1960-66* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1967), 18.

Jacksonville park. A black housewife was killed by shots fired from a passing car. Two days of violence followed, during which at least 465 people were arrested.<sup>403</sup> Renick was ready to comment again as an observer from South Florida:

Jacksonville and its elected officials have been anything but enthusiastic over recognizing the need for any improvement in the field of race relations.

Finally, the bi-racial committee, frustrated in its efforts to achieve meaningful communication between city officials and the Negro community disbanded a month ago.

Meanwhile the Ku Klux Klan has remained active--holding weekly meetings; the home of a Negro child attending an all--white school was dynamited.<sup>404</sup>

Renick then noted that Jacksonville Mayor Haydon Burns had deputized almost five hundred firemen, raising to nearly one thousand the number of officers ready to enforce the racial status quo.

Florida has made some progress in race relations. But in Miami lines of communications have remained open between Negro and White leadership. Miami has had no violence--Miami is moving peacefully ahead at the moment--the Negro's main complaint is the slowness of the pace.

But in Jacksonville, the Negro has been told, in effect, "Stay in your place."<sup>405</sup>

The trouble was quieted only when Mayor Burns formed the bi-racial committee Renick had called for four years earlier.<sup>406</sup>

---

<sup>403</sup> Ibid., 252-253.

<sup>404</sup> Ralph Renick, "Jacksonville Race Riots Gives Florida Black-Eye," 24 March 1964.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

The following night, in another editorial, Renick attempted to use the Jacksonville troubles as an illustration of how civil rights difficulties should not be approached in Miami.

We haven't regarded the actions of Jacksonville city officials as commendable, nor do we see any excuse for the violence committed by Negroes in that city. What we are saying is that both sides have erred.

If the Negro thinks his progress is too slow, then he must work harder to bring it about--but in peace.

And, if the Whites think they can ignore or put off the Negro's demands for equality, then we are headed for more trouble.<sup>407</sup>

#### St. Augustine

"Three-hundred miles up the coast" from Miami, St. Augustine was also the scene of racial troubles in the 1960s. The problems were more severe in St. Augustine than in some Florida cities for several reasons. Among the reasons: local officials refused to negotiate with black representatives; the activities of local black dentist and civil rights activist Dr. Robert Hayling; the refusal of local authorities to interfere with Klan elements and other segregationist groups; and Dr. Martin Luther King and the Southern Christian

---

<sup>406</sup> Sobel, 252-253. An earlier bi-racial committee had disbanded because of frustration over its inability to establish a dialogue between blacks and whites.

<sup>407</sup> Ralph Renick, "A Lesson to be Learned from Jacksonville," 25 March 1964.



Leaderships Conference's campaign in St. Augustine that drew national press coverage.<sup>408</sup>

One of the reasons the national press was interested in what was happening in St. Augustine was the participation of Mary Peabody, the mother of Massachusetts Governor Endicott Peabody, Jr. Mrs. Peabody and a racially mixed group employed a common Southern Christian Leadership Conference strategy when they asked to be served lunch at a whites-only restaurant, knowing they would be arrested. Mary Peabody was taken to the Duval County Jail, where she held a news conference before spending the night. More than one hundred other civil rights protesters had also been arrested in similar and simultaneous restaurant sit-ins. The tactic had worked. Mrs. Peabody was on the nightly network news programs, as well as the local newscasts. Robert Hartley wrote, "The curtain was now ready to open on one of the longest and bloodiest civil rights campaigns of the early 1960s."<sup>409</sup>

Mary Peabody flew home to Massachusetts on 3 April, ending the St. Augustine Easter campaign, but the St.

---

<sup>408</sup> Robert W. Hartley "Don't Tread on Grandmother Peabody," in *St. Augustine, Fl., 1963-1964*, David J. Garrow, ed. (Brooklyn, 1989), 27-39.

<sup>409</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

Augustine civil rights story was far from over. Plans were already underway for the summer's activities in St. Augustine. The SCLC and other civil rights workers would soon be met with violence in St. Augustine again--and the rest of the state would be watching as events unfolded in St. Augustine's "long, hot summer." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., opened the summer campaign officially on 26 May. King acknowledged that a long, hot summer was on the way, but he vowed it would be a nonviolent one.<sup>410</sup> The power structure in St. Augustine was not willing to negotiate.

Civil rights activity and racial conflict increased in the old city. Demonstrators were arrested in lunch counter sit-ins. A march on 27 May, involving hundreds of demonstrators and organized by the SCLC, ended at St. Augustine's Slave Market when whites, armed with ax handles, chains, clubs, and bricks waded into the marchers and members of the press covering the event.<sup>411</sup> Battle lines drawn earlier were becoming more distinct. Police officers stepped up the number of arrests of demonstrators. Jail conditions became deplorable because of overcrowding. The SCLC called in

---

<sup>410</sup> "Race Protest Start Vowed in St. Johns," *Florida Times-Union*, 27 May 1964, 29.

<sup>411</sup> Garrow, 44.

lawyers William Kunstler and Tobias Simon to help fight injunctions against marches. The northern press sent more reporters and cameras, drawn by the presence of Dr. King. Civil rights groups sent more demonstrators to join the locals.

Martin Luther King, Jr., was in and out of town during late May and early June. On one visit, he renewed his call for "enough accord to make further street demonstrations unnecessary." He asked that hotel and restaurant facilities be desegregated within thirty days; that the city hire Negro employees, including police officers and firefighters; that a bi-racial committee be set up to settle civil rights problems; that charges be dropped against the demonstrators; and that job applications from Negroes be judged, not on race, but on merit.<sup>412</sup> St. Augustine's white power structure ignored King.

Events began to unfold with increasing frequency. On 10 June 1964, violence broke out again as armed whites attacked marchers in Constitution Plaza. The white thugs singled out white marchers for particularly vicious beatings. On 11 June, Dr. King was arrested for refusing to leave the

---

<sup>412</sup> "Dr. King's Plea Moves Seventeen Rabbis to Join St. Augustine Protest," *The New York Times*, 18 June 1964, 5.

restaurant at the Monson Motor Lodge.<sup>413</sup> The St. Augustine sit-ins moved to the city's churches, where more demonstrators were arrested. On 17 June, the action moved to St. Augustine Beach. Although public facilities were integrated by law, there was no such integration in fact. There was no violence, but about a dozen whites left the beach. Civil rights demonstrators moved back to the Monson Motor Lodge the next day, diving into the swimming pool there. Motor lodge owner Jimmy Brock poured two gallons of muriatic acid into the pool and an off-duty police officer beat the demonstrators until they left.<sup>414</sup>

Ralph Renick, concerned about the racial climate in his own city during the summer of 1964, had not mentioned the civil rights problems of the state's oldest city, but on 19 June, Renick broke his silence, saying:

What happens in St. Augustine is reflective on the entire state of Florida. . . . Miami and other sections have had an enlightened attitude toward improving race relations. Despite this, however, these cities may very well suffer because of the troubles in one city 300 miles up the coast.

The unfortunate part of St. Augustine's problem is the reluctance to reach any sort of compromise. Martin Luther King and his demonstrators have adamantly continued their publicity-inspired efforts to put the

---

<sup>413</sup> William Robert Miller, *Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Avon Books, 1968), 201, cited in Garrow, 53.

<sup>414</sup> Garrow, 59.

spotlight on St. Augustine. King's success has been due to the unbending attitude of the city's leadership to communicate with the Negro community.

A crack in the dike appeared earlier in the week when the Grand Jury of St. John's County recommended a 30-day cooling off period, after which a bi-racial committee would be set up. King today came back with a counter-peace proposal to call off demonstrations for one week if the Grand Jury, which went into recess yesterday, would reconvene and to work immediately a bi-racial committee.

The Jury foreman responded by saying the Jury would not be intimidated nor would it negotiate nor would it change its mind.

Responsibility would appear the key word in the dispute.

The lack of leadership in the past has provoked the present crisis which can only be solved by an awakened leadership which recognizes the rights of all--black and white.<sup>415</sup>

The crisis in St. Augustine continued, with nightly marches to the Slave Market, continued attempts by blacks to integrate beaches with so-called "swim-ins," and frequent and severe beatings of the nonviolent demonstrators. On the night of 25 June, a crowd of several hundred whites attacked black and white civil rights marchers in the Slave Market. A contingent of two hundred police made a futile attempt to protect the marchers but gave up in the face of overwhelming numbers and raw, racist hatred. Demonstrators and reporters were beaten. Nineteen demonstrators were hospitalized, and many more injured less seriously. Anti-integrationists,

---

<sup>415</sup> Ralph Renick, Florida's Oldest City Bucking Oldest Problem," 19 June 1964.

particularly angered by attempts by blacks to use St. Augustine beaches, promised more confrontations.<sup>416</sup>

The 25 June incidents exhausted both sides. As an apparent result, although swim-ins continued, there was an undeclared moratorium in extreme, massive violence. The Civil Rights Act passed the U.S. Senate on 17 June. It was a foregone conclusion that President Johnson would sign the measure.<sup>417</sup> Renick was ready to comment again on events in northern Florida:

All of the good works and the sincere efforts of painstaking negotiations that have made Florida a leader in responsible progress in race relations are dashed with every report of violence and new beatings coming out of St. Augustine. The overtones are all the more serious because our Governor has personally taken charge and created a combined state and local police force under one command - yet violence goes on. . . . This state is made to look ridiculous when couple of middle-aged women, incensed over the wade-ins, can easily break through lines of highway patrolmen and deputies to beat on a demonstrator.

We cannot believe that police cannot preserve law and order and must wonder just how sincere are their efforts to prevent violence.

Newsmen covering the city call St. Augustine the most explosive, violence-prone city they've ever covered in the south and that takes in a lot of violence and a lot of territory.

Are all of Florida's good works and hopes of years to be forgotten because of a collection of hooligans who attack people they know will not fight back? Is this

---

<sup>416</sup> "St. Augustine Mob Attacks Negroes," *New York Times*, 26 June 1964, 1.

<sup>417</sup> Garrow, 70.

Florida's answer to the Civil Rights Movement. Must we be lumped with Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama?<sup>418</sup>

### New Orleans

Renick's civil rights opinions stretched not only to other parts of the state of Florida, but also to other parts of the United States. When Louisiana Governor Jimmie Davis shut down the schools in his state to prevent court-ordered integration, Renick called for Louisiana to adopt "a more realistic viewpoint to the law of the land."<sup>419</sup> When rioting broke out in New Orleans because of attempts to integrate schools, Renick castigated the leadership as well as the citizenry of the city of New Orleans and the state of Louisiana. He was particularly critical of Governor Davis and state legislators, whom he called "demagogues" for their attempts to circumvent federal integration orders. Some of his most severe criticism was reserved for New Orleans parents who had demonstrated against school integration:

It's admittedly easy to criticize another state from a somewhat distant vantage point in Miami, but we feel

---

<sup>418</sup> Ralph Renick, "St. Augustine Casting Shadow on Entire State," 29 June 1964.

<sup>419</sup> Ralph Renick, "Louisiana, Not Another Little Rock," 14 November 1960. The first part of this quote is Renick's on-camera introduction to the film and audio from New Orleans. The film is indicated by "FILM-SOUND" and "AUDIO." The final three paragraphs of the quote are Renick's on-camera editorial tag.

particularly bad about the bitter seeds sown by demagogues in and out of the Louisiana Legislature which have spawned a bumper-crop of hate and violence. The following action, this week, by a group of mothers outside a New Orleans school points this up:

FILM-SOUND

WHITE MOTHERS 7 LITTLE  
CHILDREN - ONE WOMAN  
WITH REPORTER

AUDIO

"We don't want no niggers in our neighborhood. Why don't you move in a colored quarter? They got places for you (CROWD JEERS--SHOUTS)  
Why should our children have to suffer for one little nigger? Now you answer that. One little nigger and 400 children's got to leave."  
(THEN A WOMAN HOLDING A LITTLE BOY IN HER ARMS TELLS BOY TO SAY, "Tell the man we don't want to integrate, tell him we don't want no niggers."  
(BOY SAYS NO).

It is generally accepted that mothers the world over--even in Louisiana hold a responsibility to teach their young the ways of morality, justice and respect for law.

We feel the howling matriarchs of White supremacy in New Orleans hardly rate for any Mother of the Year awards.

They have not only shamed themselves before a world audience, but there is no telling what scars they have left on the minds of their own children. Such are the tragic results when the law is flouted (sic) and morality is abandoned to emotion.<sup>420</sup>

Los Angeles

The violence in summer 1965 in Los Angeles was the most destructive the country had seen in decades. Thirty-four people were killed; more than one thousand were injured;

---

<sup>420</sup> Ralph Renick, "Tragedy in the Streets of New Orleans," 1 December 1960.



losses were estimated at \$40 million; almost four thousand people were arrested.<sup>421</sup>

The trouble had started when police in the Watts section of the city tried to arrest a young black man after a stop on suspicion of drunk driving. A crowd had gathered; the officers had come under attack and had called for backup. The crowd grew into the hundreds, then into the thousands. It was estimated that eventually as many as 7,000 to 10,000 black citizens had taken part in the rioting before it ended six days later. A 150-square-block area of Los Angeles was devastated. The greater toll had been the "revival or creation of mutual hate and fear between Negroes and whites."<sup>422</sup>

There were similarities between Los Angeles and other cities in the country and in Florida in which racial trouble had erupted. The police chief in Los Angeles had a reputation for treating blacks unfairly. Chief William H. Parker III had little respect for civil rights leaders, on whose doorstep he laid some of the blame for the Los Angeles violence. Parker said, "When you keep telling people they

---

<sup>421</sup> Sobel, 306.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid.

are unfairly treated and teach them disrespect for the law, you must expect this kind of thing sooner or later."<sup>423</sup>

Community leaders also cited poverty, unemployment, and de facto school segregation as reasons for the explosion of violence in Watts. From the other side of the country, Renick warned his Miami viewers that what had happened in Los Angeles was the result of "years of lack of opportunity for the Negro," an implied message that lack of opportunity for Miami blacks could also mean trouble.<sup>424</sup>

#### Miami

Even as Renick was commenting on civil rights problems in other cities, he was keeping an editorial eye on civil rights developments in Miami. Renick warned in February 1964 that there were danger signs in Miami, that without changes, Miami, too, could be facing civil rights problems. Renick's editorial quoted the farewell remarks of Seymour Samet, who had headed the area's Community Relations Board on an interim basis during its first nine months of existence. Samet had said, "Miami, long noted for its superficial attendance to the major problems of our times, has muddled through on

---

<sup>423</sup> Ibid., 308.

<sup>424</sup> Ralph Renick, "Violence Sometimes Teaches A Lesson," 16 August 1965.

economic planning, urban growth and social welfare." Samet warned that in the absence of real civil rights progress, those factors were not enough.<sup>425</sup>

Plans were being considered for sit-ins at one of Dade County's major industries, there was resistance to blacks moving into previously all-white neighborhoods, only a few of the community's black children were attending integrated schools, and touted improvements in employment opportunity and public accommodation in hotels and restaurants was, in fact, only tokenism. Renick quoted Samet: "[W]e are enmeshed in a revolution--not an evolution."<sup>426</sup>

Two and a half months later, Renick praised formation of the Metro Community Relations Board, a bi-racial group of fifteen citizens. He warned, "The work of the Community Relations Board can come to nothing if we citizens of Dade

---

<sup>425</sup> Renick, "Racial Danger Signs Appear in Miami," 25 February 1964.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid. This editorial was broadcast one month before trouble flared in Jacksonville. In this editorial, Renick included Cuban refugees in the groups that were treated unfairly in Miami, calling them "scapegoats of our many ills." This was a theme he was to visit frequently in the years after Fidel Castro seized power in Cuba and Cuban refugees flooded into the Miami area.

turn a deaf ear to the rights of all citizens."<sup>427</sup> Later the same month, Renick called for the keeping of voting lists by race to be abolished.<sup>428</sup>

On the day President Johnson signed the new Civil Rights Act, Renick cautioned his viewers that the job of attaining equal rights for all Americans was not over: "Today the Congress made it official. But tonight and tomorrow, it is up to all of us to make come to pass what we all believe--that this nation is what we claim it to be--the home of equality for all."<sup>429</sup>

Renick addressed the issue of equal treatment in the justice system long before many newsmen when he editorialized in early 1965. In speaking of capital punishment in Florida, Renick emphasized that, although a roughly equal number of blacks and whites had been convicted of rape between 1940 and 1964, thirty-five of the thirty-six men who had been electrocuted for the crime were black. Renick said, "Equal punishment for Negroes and Whites would seem a minimum

---

<sup>427</sup> Ralph Renick, "Racial Harmony Is Everyone's Business," 7 May 1964. Once again, Renick included Cubans among those whose rights and needs were important.

<sup>428</sup> Ralph Renick, "Voting in Florida Should Not Be a Black and White Issue," 29 May 1964.

<sup>429</sup> Ralph Renick, "Civil Rights Is Everybody's Job," 2 July 1964.

requirement, particularly when a man sits in the electric chair."<sup>430</sup>

The next month Renick praised the Miami area's record of avoiding racial trouble, although racial strife was hitting other areas of the country. In praising the Metro Community Relations Board, Renick said the reason for Miami's relatively untroubled record was that the area had "avoided trouble by not waiting for trouble to erupt."<sup>431</sup>

In July 1965, Renick offered his support to a Community Relations Board solution for black parents dissatisfied with plans to build a new school in a predominately black section of town. Parents had complained that building a new school in the black section would serve only to promote the status quo of de facto segregation. The Board recommended that two smaller schools be built, one in the black section of the school district, one in the white district. Students, and their parents, were to be allowed to choose which school they would attend and would not be forced to attend the one closest to their home if they found the racial mix, or lack of it, unsatisfactory. It was the board's idea that some

---

<sup>430</sup> Ralph Renick, "Capital Punishment in Florida," 2 February 1965.

<sup>431</sup> Ralph Renick, "Miami Is Not Like Selma," 12 July 1965.

black children would go to school in the white neighborhood and some white children would go to school in the black neighborhood. In retrospect, such a plan may seem idealistic, but Renick, writing from the perspective of the 1960s, approved, saying:

Observe any first grader in today's world. He neither cares nor is overtly aware that his seatmate is black or white. If this attitude is adopted in the first grade, his generation is well on the way to avoiding all the racial misery the nation is going through.<sup>432</sup>

It was another attempt by Renick to promote racial harmony in his community.

In summer of 1967, racial harmony for Miami was still on Renick's mind. In June, he called for increased opportunity for recreation for young people, as well as housing and employment opportunities. He also editorialized for a redoubling of efforts "before, not after, trouble starts." Eyes, as usual, on other parts of the country, as well as Miami, Renick reminded viewers there had already been trouble early in the summer in Lansing, Detroit, Cincinnati, and Dayton.<sup>433</sup>

---

<sup>432</sup> Ralph Renick, "Racial Disharmony Stirred at New School Site," 12 July 1965.

<sup>433</sup> Ralph Renick, "Let's Keep Miami Cool This Summer," 16 June 1967.

As summer progressed, the streets of cities such as Newark, New York, Detroit, and Plainfield (NJ) erupted in rioting and racial conflict. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., had warned in April that at least ten cities were ripe for violence during the coming summer. King described the cities as "powder kegs," saying conditions that had caused riots the previous summer still existed. King had listed Cleveland, Chicago, Los Angeles, Oakland, Washington, Newark, and New York as cities that were in danger of racial strife. He did not name any other cities but said some of them were in the south.<sup>434</sup>

In mid-July, the worst rioting since Watts hit Newark, New Jersey. With the familiar problems of poverty, high unemployment, segregated schools, and an unresponsive city government, it was no wonder that Newark had been on King's list. After police arrested a black taxi driver, then scuffled with him as they took him into the Fourth Precinct station house, rumors floated through the community that the taxi driver had been beaten to death. A mob converged on the station house, throwing rocks and bottles. The disturbance spread to Newark's downtown section. It would be five days

---

<sup>434</sup> Steven D. Price, ed., *Civil Rights 1967-68* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1973), 4.

before an uneasy calm returned to Newark. In that time, twenty-six people would die; more than 1,500 would be injured; almost 1,400 arrested; more than three hundred fires would be reported; the rioting would cover almost one-half of the city's area; and estimates of damage would range from \$15 million to \$30 million.<sup>435</sup>

Disturbances also hit other cities mentioned by King. A policeman was killed in Plainfield, New Jersey. The New Jersey violence spread to Englewood, New Brunswick, Elizabeth, Jersey City and Passaic. Forty people were killed in Detroit during the last week of July. Three days of rioting in New York City's Spanish Harlem followed the shooting death by an off-duty police officer of a young Puerto Rican with a knife in his hand who was spotted standing over another man on the ground; two people died. There was violence in Dayton, Ohio; Cambridge, Maryland; and East Saint Louis, Illinois. The summer of 1967 saw racial conflict in three dozen communities in all, including Tampa and West Palm Beach, and the shadow of what was happening in the rest of America fell over Miami.<sup>436</sup>

---

<sup>435</sup> Ibid., 5. All the editorialists examined for this dissertation were working within the same context.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid., 6-45.



Rumors spread throughout the city of trouble on the way. It seemed illogical to think that Miami could escape the rage gripping much of the rest of the country. Renick tried to persuade his viewers not to let rumors with no factual basis spark disturbances in Miami. "South Florida tonight seems inundated by rumors," he said, but he called on citizens to get the facts in the wake of disturbances in other cities.<sup>437</sup> When summer 1967 ended, Miami was not one of the cities on the long list of American places torn by violence in the struggle for equal rights.

Miami would not be so fortunate in 1968, the year Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated. In the week following King's death, rioting and other forms of violence broke out in more than 125 U.S. cities. Forty-six people were killed; 2,600 injured; more than 21,000 arrested; property damage was estimated at \$45 million; more than 50,000 regular federal and National Guard troops were deployed to American cities as local law enforcement was overwhelmed by the size and ferocity of the outbreaks.<sup>438</sup>

---

<sup>437</sup> Ralph Renick, "A Time for Facts, Not Rumors," 28 July 1967.

<sup>438</sup> Price, 1967-68, 230-232.

The Defense Department reported spending nearly \$5.5 million to deploy troops to violence-stricken cities. Washington, DC, was the hardest hit of American cities, with about one-third of the property damage in the country. For the first time since the administration of Herbert Hoover sent Douglas MacArthur to rout World War I veterans demanding bigger military bonuses, federal troops were deployed on the streets of the capital. In all, 6,000 troops patrolled in and around Washington. A machine-gun post was set up on Capitol Hill.

In Washington and the other cities, there had been selective looting and burning, according to the President's adviser on community affairs, Betty Furness.<sup>439</sup> Furness reported it was the merchants believed by looters to have been gouging ghetto customers who were targeted, although the belief may have been untrue.<sup>440</sup> Resentment had been growing against merchants who sold television sets and other appliances to customers at more than one and a half times prices charged in other parts of the cities. Furness used the Watts section of Los Angeles as an example. She also noted that ghetto customers bought 93 percent of their

---

<sup>439</sup> Ibid., 232.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid.

purchases on the installment plan, a process that meant they paid more as a group for goods because of the interest charges involved.<sup>441</sup> The King assassination had been the trigger for release of some of the resentments that had been building because of the unfairness of the economic realities of being black and poor in America.

Pessimism increased in Miami following King's death. Black leaders in cities all around Miami expressed fear that the nonviolent civil rights movement was over. A black police sergeant in Riviera Beach warned that the murder of King would mean an increase in racial tension everywhere.<sup>442</sup>

A deputy director of the Broward Office of Economic Opportunity lamented, "Now there is no hope."<sup>443</sup> The organizer of the Liberty City Community Council told the *Miami Herald*, "A lot of people who say nonviolence won't work will say 'I told you so.'"<sup>444</sup>

Others in Liberty City, a black residential and business section of Miami, agreed. A middle-aged man told reporters,

---

<sup>441</sup> Ibid.

<sup>442</sup> "Florida Negroes are Pessimistic, *Miami Herald*, 5 April 1968, 13A.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid.

"God, here's a man that they beat and kick and slap around and he never hit anybody and now they go and shoot him," and a young black told a companion, "Whitey's gonna catch hell now."<sup>445</sup>

In spite of these warnings, there was no serious racial violence reported in Miami in the wake of the King assassination.<sup>446</sup> While other cities experienced riots and looting, Miami was calm.

Renick covered the events in Miami and, at the end of *The Ralph Renick Report* the night after King's death, editorialized, "Desecrating his memory by looting or rioting or fighting is sheer folly that this nation and everything it hopes for cannot afford."<sup>447</sup>

Two weeks later, as the city had cooled down temporarily, Renick was still attempting to encourage Miami area citizens to move toward an integrated society. Renick warned his viewers, "Don't let schools that are integrated become all Negro--as happened at Miami Jackson High School,"

---

<sup>445</sup> "'Era of Progress, Hope Has Ended,' Miami Negro Says." *Miami Herald*, 5 April 1968, 20A.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>447</sup> Ralph Renick, "The Violent End of a Man of Peace," 5 April 1968.

which had gone from an all-white to an all-black school in just a few years.<sup>448</sup>

In mid-May, as the "Poor People's March" reached Washington, DC, and construction began on "Resurrection City," rumors of possible renewed racial violence drifted across Miami.<sup>449</sup> In Washington, executive vice president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference Andrew Young warned that the choice for America was "massive change or riots."<sup>450</sup> Fuel was added to the rumors when fourteen black students were arrested at the University of Miami as they staged a lie-in in the office of university President Henry King Stanford, demanding black-oriented courses.<sup>451</sup> Renick, as he had a year earlier, called on Miamians not to be swayed by rumors of racial troubles in Miami, suggesting the Community Relations Board turn its attention to the rumor problem and recalling one day of rampant rumors the previous summer. Renick said, "It will be only with fact and not

---

<sup>448</sup> Ralph Renick, "Keeping the Racial Balance in Miami Schools," 18 April 1968.

<sup>449</sup> Robert H. Feldkamp, "Tattered 'Army of the Poor' reaches D.C. Promised land," *Miami Herald*, 14 May 1968, 1A.

<sup>450</sup> Saul Friedman, "Choice is Massive Change or Riots," *Miami Herald*, 15 May 1968, 10A.

<sup>451</sup> Jim Buchanan, "14 Negro Students Arrested After UM Demonstration," *Miami Herald*, 15 May 1968, 1A.

rumor that Miami will be able to maintain its record of quiet summers and cool heads."<sup>452</sup>

The quiet summers and cool heads of which Renick spoke became a thing of the past the night of 7 August. The Republican National Convention was underway on Miami Beach. Speakers at the convention were bemoaning the violence and lawlessness that had plagued the country for so many years. The Reverend Ralph Abernathy had come to Miami Beach with Martin Luther King's "Poor People's Campaign" to protest where those attending the convention could see such a protest first-hand. As residents in the black residential area in northwest Miami held a black voter power rally, a white newsman covering the event refused to show his credentials. Violence broke out. Police cordoned off an eight-square-block area. Miami Mayor Steve Clark, Florida Governor Claude Kirk, and The Reverend Ralph Abernathy went to the scene to appeal for an end to the disturbance. Later in the evening, Abernathy appeared on Miami television, asking for calm. By ten o'clock, calm appeared to have been restored. It was only temporary.<sup>453</sup>

---

<sup>452</sup> Ralph Renick, "Squelching the Spread of Racial Rumors," 16 May 1968.

<sup>453</sup> Price, 270.

The next day, fighting broke out between police and blacks at a meeting where Kirk and Abernathy were expected to make an appearance. Neither man came. As disturbance turned to riot, 1,000 National Guard troops were brought into the area, along with Florida Highway Patrol officers and equipment. Motorists driving through the Liberty City area were pulled from their cars and set upon by the mob. The pattern so familiar in 1960s America was repeated as fires were set and stores looted. The riot was short-lived, but deadly. Three blacks were killed by police gunfire on 8 August, one of them a passerby caught in the crossfire.<sup>454</sup>

Those attending the Republican National Convention had almost gotten a very close look at civil strife in America. Rioting had spread to within one mile of the convention hall. Dade County Mayor Chuck Hall did not look within his own community for the source of the problem. Instead, he blamed outsiders for what had happened, charging that it was no coincidence the first race riot in Miami area history had broken out when so many reporters were in town.<sup>455</sup>

---

<sup>454</sup> Ibid. 271.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid.

In his editorial that night, Renick refused to lay direct blame for the riots but made it clear he thought Miami's problems did not stem from without:

Miami's sense of euphoria at having an unblemished record of racial harmony has been crushed by the developments in Liberty City.

This is not the appropriate time to start laying the blame for the root causes of the violent eruption-- it is a time to appeal to the rioters to "cool it" and to appeal to city officials to respond more effectively to the plight of those in the black area.

What Miami is facing is no different than the racial and poverty issues gnawing at the inner core of the nation itself. The presence of a national political convention here may have triggered the timing of Liberty City's uprising, but the combustible ingredients for the fire had been warming for some time. However, the crucial matter of the moment is to restore peace to the city. . . .

With peace restored, the lines of communication between races within the city need to be opened wider and more aggressive attention be given to what's needed to keep the embers cooled.<sup>456</sup>

Two days later, as the embers cooled, 250 of those arrested during the riots were released from jail without paying bond. Medical teams were sent into the riot area to treat the injured. National Guard patrols were reduced. In return, black leaders agreed to do their best to keep their neighborhoods quiet, in spite of the anger that lingered over alleged police brutality during the riots. It was anger on top of anger. Miami's 200,000 black residents, about one-

---

<sup>456</sup> Ralph Renick, "It Finally Happened Here," 8 August 1968.



tenth of the population, were experiencing 10 percent unemployment. Many of those who were employed held low-paying jobs. Although several Miami area schools were listed as integrated, the overwhelming majority of black youngsters attended all-black schools in the ghetto. Clifford A. Strauss of the Urban League called Miami "the most racially segregated city in the country no matter how much money you have to spend."<sup>457</sup>

Strauss's assessment was supported by Marvin Dunn of Florida International University. Dunn wrote of a history of strained race relations in Miami, including "the day in February 1968, when two white police officers stripped Robert Quentin Owens, a seventeen-year-old black youth, and dangled him by his heels from an overpass, an event which, among others, led to Miami's racial explosion of that year."<sup>458</sup> It was not just the events of 1968 that led to the troubles of 1968, wrote Dunn: "[E]ssentially the history of blacks in Miami and in Liberty City is a history of being ignored, displaced, or quietly oppressed."<sup>459</sup>

---

<sup>457</sup> Price, 271.

<sup>458</sup> Marvin Dunn, "Death Watch," in *Eyes on the Prize*, eds. Clayborne Carson and others (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 670.

<sup>459</sup> Ibid.

Renick had also observed that law enforcement during the riots had been less than exemplary. In his 12 August editorial, the day after an 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew had been lifted, Renick was strongly critical of law enforcement, particularly Miami's police chief:

At this point, it seems apparent that despite Miami Police Chief Walter Headley's widely publicized threat that "when the looting starts, the shooting starts," there was a singular lack of command decision to meet the emergency.

There was confusion of command. The policeman under attack wanted the National Guard pulled in.

The mayor of Miami, strangely, has no direct jurisdiction over the police chief--that job falls to the employed City Manager. The manager refused for some hours to call up the Guard.

Governor Kirk was also in the act, as was County Mayor Chuck Hall. The governor finally ordered Sheriff W. Wilson Purdy to assume command even though the action was taking place within the city limits. Miami Chief of Police Walter Headley was vacationing at his North Carolina retreat and is still there. He didn't return to supervise his forces in the tense hours which followed. The Miami police ran short on tear gas and ammunition. The "Monster Machine" armored truck of the Highway Patrol was used to indiscriminately shoot teargas into occupied housing units and other places away from the direct scene of trouble.

Renick also criticized police for staying out of the riot area at the height of violence, failing to protect businesses and people. He suggested that the "matter is serious enough for the Chief of Police to interrupt his vacation and return to his position of command." If Headley could not come back immediately, said Renick, he should

"permanently retire and turn the reins over to somebody willing to face up to this key responsibility."<sup>460</sup>

With the end of crisis conditions in Miami, the number of WTVJ editorials on civil rights diminished, but the subject was apparently never far from Renick's thoughts. In September he agreed with University of Miami President Henry King Stanford that the song, *Dixie*, should not be played at University of Miami events. Both *Dixie* and the Confederate flag, said Renick, were "symbols [of] an anachronistic expression of racial prejudice."<sup>461</sup> Another editorial one month later called for blacks to share in the wealth of the Miami area, for the addition of more black employees to city payrolls, and for improved education for black students.<sup>462</sup>

As the turbulent 1960s drew to a close, Miami had not completely escaped racial violence, although the degree of violence, the number of deaths, and the dollar amounts of damage were not as great as many other big American cities. It is impossible to conclude that the editorial comments of

---

<sup>460</sup> Ralph Renick, "A Hard Look at Miami Riot Control," 12 August 1968.

<sup>461</sup> Ralph Renick, "Southern Heritage: Living on Without *Dixie*," 27 September 1968.

<sup>462</sup> Ralph Renick, "Tough Talk for a Tough Situation," 24 October 1968.

the most powerful broadcast voice in the Miami market contributed to a lesser level of strife. As usual, direct correlation is impossible to prove. It is possible to imagine that he had some ameliorative effect on Miami's civil rights tribulations. It is evident that at times Renick was a voice of reason in his city, an existential presence who took seriously the responsibility that came with his job, a true community journalist.

Like the other editorialists who are subjects of this dissertation, Ralph Renick displayed a consistent communitarian spirit, delivering editorials that urged fellow travelers in his society to do the right thing. Renick was responsible for more editorials than either Brechner or Davis, in part because he was first, in part because he stayed longest.

The Miami broadcaster's editorials were sometimes in the form of crusades, sometimes on the same subject for many consecutive nights. The apparent effectiveness of his crusades is easier to gauge when he was editorializing on striptease establishments or unsanitary restaurants. Results of campaigns on crime, governmental corruption, and civil rights are not as easily measured.

CHAPTER 9  
NORM DAVIS AND THE EDITORIALS OF WJXT-TV

The work of the third editorialist considered in this dissertation is somewhat different from the previous two. Norm Davis and WJXT-TV in Jacksonville presented a more team-oriented effort. Editorials were combined with regular investigative news reports more regularly than the editorials at WTVJ-TV and WFTV-TV.

Davis had been brought into the news department in 1960 to work on the investigative reports because News Director Bill Grove wanted more than a "rip and read" newscast. In producing his editorials, Davis had Grove's full support, as well as that of the rest of station management and parent company Post-Newsweek. Davis wrote and read the editorials because the news team felt news anchors should not be identified with opinion. Such an association would harm their objectivity in the delivery of news stories.<sup>463</sup>

---

<sup>463</sup> Michael Hornerger, "How TV Can Move a City Into Action," *Television Magazine*, October 1966, 43.

In concert with the editorial campaign at WJXT, a three-year investigative campaign brought about momentous change in the Jacksonville area. Davis continued to contribute to the investigative effort, even after two investigative reporters were hired. He was also consulted on how news stories on the investigative topics were to be handled. Reporters who worked in the newsroom in the 1960s recall the frequent closed-door meetings involving investigative reporters, the news director, and the editorial director. Former reporter/anchor John Thomas recalls some paranoia that word would get out about the team's efforts. Davis has claimed not to remember any such paranoia.<sup>464</sup>

The crusade examined in this section was much shorter than the crusade(s) examined at the other stations. It was a three-year campaign that consumed all the effort of some of the broadcasters. Unlike the campaigns of Ralph Renick in Miami and Joe Brechner in Orlando, there was no civil rights element. It was an all-out, all-consuming attack on corruption in local government, a crusade that was a major factor in bringing about a change in Jacksonville area government that had been resisted for a century, a crusade

---

<sup>464</sup> Interview with John Thomas in Tallahassee on 8 November 1997. Interview with Norm Davis on 6 October 1997.

that directly resulted in the resignations or removals from office of a large contingent of Jacksonville area government officials.

This chapter describes the launch of the Davis editorials on WJXT-TV, Davis' motivations for his strong editorial commitment, and the situation in Jacksonville and Duval County that led Davis and his co-workers at WJXT-TV to pursue their brand of community journalism. It was community journalism that involved strong editorials combined with investigative reporting. This chapter concludes with a recounting of the reactions of the people involved to the changes wrought in Jacksonville in the mid-1960s.

### The Editorials Begin

With no editorial history at the station, WJXT-TV had made its start-up editorial policy clear in September 1962:

Tonight WJXT launches an editorial policy which we hope will fill a community need, and at the outset we feel we should elaborate a bit on what we intend to do.

Our editorial comment will follow in the tradition of WJXT's "Project 4" series, which has established itself as a pioneer in Jacksonville in aggressive, candid reporting of community issues and problems. We intend to continue this tradition on frequent occasions as an integral part of *Newsnight* [the six and eleven p.m. newscasts]. Our comment, by and large will concern local regional issues and problems, since these are most in need of exploration. We do not intend to be limited in what we will study, and this will include many vital issues which have heretofore been by-passed altogether.

It was a fairly innocuous beginning, with little warning of the disruption WTVJ editorials would raise within the area's inefficient, corrupt back rooms of government, but there was a foreshadowing of what was to come, when Davis told his audience that the editorials would not be delivered on a nightly basis; they would be on "a need basis" so there would be no necessity to editorialize about "those safe popular issues everyone can agree on." Grove said, "We do not expect that all our views will be universally popular, but we do hope they will stimulate increased thought and concern for the problems and issues that affect us all."<sup>465</sup>

#### Davis Background

In 1999, Davis had no difficulty remembering the circumstances surrounding the WJXT-TV editorial/investigative reports campaign that brought about major changes in Jacksonville area government. It was more difficult for him to recall what it was in his background that led him to become a crusader for good government. Davis's father was a military man, stationed in Key West until Davis was twelve years old. Both Davis and his sister were encouraged to pursue their education although their parents had not advanced beyond sixth grade. There was no strong religious

---

<sup>465</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 10 September 1962.



factor in the upbringing of the Davis children. Nonetheless, Davis developed what he terms a "calling." He said, "It may be the kind of thing that calls various people to a pulpit or a ministry someplace, but it was innate somehow. . . . Part of my inner motivations--somehow I acquired this sense that power shouldn't be abused, and I still have it."<sup>466</sup>

One factor that led Davis and other members of the WJXT news team to their editorial crusade was chance. Local news media in Jacksonville were not "digging in," according to Davis. Both Davis and his associate, News Director Bill Grove, were to recall that some of the media were owned in part and controlled by the Florida East Coast Railway. The F.E.C. was part of the business power structure of the Jacksonville area and wanted no one revealing facts that would disturb that power structure. The government was not responsive to its citizens; churches were "not lifting a finger"; and the school system was in chaos. There was a void--and WJXT moved in.<sup>467</sup>

There was not even a plan, says Davis. The WJXT news team just began looking at individual problems. Those problems became part of a pattern, and that pattern became

---

<sup>466</sup> Interview with Norm Davis, 8 March 1999.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

the subject of WJXT's campaign to get rid of not only the corrupt government office holders in the Jacksonville area but also the system that had allowed corruption and inefficiency to become the norm.<sup>468</sup>

Norm Davis had developed his interest in broadcast journalism at the University of Florida in the 1950s. He became so involved with the college radio station, WRUF, that he not only worked at the station for four-and-one-half years, he sometimes lived in the station because to have left the station to sleep elsewhere would have been a waste of valuable time. There was, however, no broadcast journalism program at the University of Florida, so even as he continued to work and live at the station, he switched his course of study to print journalism. He also "bugged" journalism college Dean Rae Weimer to institute a broadcast journalism curriculum. In later years, Weimer credited Davis with being responsible for getting the broadcast journalism track started at the university, telling people to whom he introduced Davis, "This is the guy who kept badgering me about doing broadcast news courses." Davis says his studies in journalism, particularly the history of journalism, made

---

<sup>468</sup> Ibid.

him think about the profession's roles and brought out the desire to "go scratch an itch somewhere."<sup>469</sup>

Another experience that brought out that desire to go scratch an itch was Davis' membership in a books discussion group in Jacksonville. Being part of the group forced him, he said, to read books he never would have had the discipline to read on his own. Among the books on the reading list was Alexis de Toqueville's *Democracy in America*. It was *Democracy in America* that introduced Davis to the idea of "self-interest properly understood." Davis said:

[A]nd as I read through his book and we chewed it up in our discussion session, it dawned on me as being a really powerful idea which was not original with de Tocqueville. It is part of a lot of philosophies, and that is what goes around comes around. And self-interest properly understood is a self-interest that understands that when you take care of somebody else, they'll take care of you. When you do something out there that is positive, somehow that is going to benefit you in the long run, and I think that is a working philosophy for business, a working philosophy for families, a working philosophy, I think, for journalists.<sup>470</sup>

Davis also said Tocqueville's ideas may have been one of the factors in his conviction that power should not be abused.

Even Tocqueville did not believe that all Americans were as interested in their own self-interest as they claimed to

---

<sup>469</sup> Ibid.

<sup>470</sup> Ibid.

be. Referring to self-interest properly understood, Tocqueville wrote:

In the United States there is hardly any talk of the beauty of virtue. But they maintain that virtue is useful and prove it every day. American moralists do not pretend that one must sacrifice himself for his fellow because it is a fine thing to do so. But they boldly assert that such sacrifice is as necessary for the man who makes it as for the beneficiaries.<sup>471</sup>

In another passage, speaking of religion in America and the same adherence to self-interest properly understood Tocqueville asserted, "I respect them too much to believe them."<sup>472</sup> Tocqueville was saying it was in the American character to want to appear to be practical in their virtue, when, in fact, they were driven by more benevolent motivations. Davis also said the practical approach is most useful when those doing good deeds are not driven by purely altruistic persuasion, but it is more desirable to be moved "from some kind of a moral or ethical imperative."<sup>473</sup>

Self-interest does not appear to have been the main motivation behind Davis' editorial work. He sounded very much like the ideal community journalist when he said in

---

<sup>471</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. George Lawrence; J.P. Mayer and Max Lerner, eds. (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 497.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*, 500.

<sup>473</sup> Davis interview, 8 March 1969.

1999, "I think one of the hallmarks of news and news reporting is to give people what they need to know in order to be good citizens and effective citizens." And there seems to have been little concern for ratings in the Jacksonville crusade against crooked government. Davis said:

No, because at that time neither Bill [news director Bill Grove] nor I understood much about ratings at all, and even less about programming as such. We did it because, in the news business, that's what you did.<sup>474</sup>

#### The Davis Editorial Campaign

On 8 August 1967, the voters of Jacksonville and Duval County, Florida, went to the polls to decide what form of government they wanted. The choice was simple. Would they continue to have a government with one group of elected and appointed officials for Jacksonville and another for Duval County or would they consolidate their government? They had been subjected to a vigorous, sometimes bitter, campaign with strong arguments on both sides. They had been subjected to racist arguments by those opposed to consolidation who tried to convince black voters that consolidation was an attempt to keep power out of the hands of the African-American community's hands.<sup>475</sup> They had heard arguments directed at

---

<sup>474</sup> Ibid.

<sup>475</sup> Richard Martin, *Consolidation: Jacksonville, Duval County* (Jacksonville: Convention Press, Inc., 1968), 160.

the African-American community that whites from the suburbs would control the city. They had heard arguments from consolidation opponents that consolidation was a communist-inspired plot.<sup>476</sup>

Residents of areas outside the city were bombarded with warnings that they would be giving up the independence they had always enjoyed and that they would be paying taxes to support the workings of the City of Jacksonville. If they voted against consolidation, citizens of the area would simply be continuing a long tradition of refusing to become part of a massive area government.<sup>477</sup>

Why then did this vote turn out differently from earlier referenda on Jacksonville area consolidation? Why when the ballots were counted had area voters approved consolidation by an almost 2-1 margin?<sup>478</sup> Furthermore, why had county voters approved consolidation by a margin of 8-5? Given the similarities between the 1967 election and other elections involving combined governments for the Jacksonville area, what was the difference in this one?

---

<sup>476</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>477</sup> Ibid., 1-21, 141.

<sup>478</sup> Ibid., 224.

There were several factors in this complicated issue, such as strong leadership, willingness of consolidation backers to tweak the plan to accommodate opponents, strong African-American support, teamwork between legislators and local proponents, almost wholehearted business support, and strong media support.<sup>479</sup> One of the major differences, however, was the work of a group of investigative reporters at television station WJXT. The reporters, led by News Director Bill Grove and Editorial Director Norm Davis, increased the intensity of their work on the government clean-up campaign in early 1965.<sup>480</sup>

Less than two years later, in late 1966, when the Local Government Study Commission released its recommendation for consolidation, eight county and city officials had been indicted on 104 counts involving expenditures of government funds for personal items, the use of government vehicles for personal needs, padding payrolls, subverting the competitive

---

<sup>479</sup> Ibid., 226-234.

<sup>480</sup> 1965 was the year WJXT began to bear down on the corruption issue, although there had been earlier editorials that were ancillary to the issues of corruption, governmental inefficiency, and consolidation.

bidding system to award contracts to favorite companies, bribery, perjury, and grand larceny.<sup>481</sup>

At first WJXT was alone in its zeal to uncover the wrongs in area government. Former *Florida Times-Union* reporter, and the paper's leading consolidation writer in the mid-'60s, Richard A. Martin in *Consolidation: Jacksonville-Duval County*, minimized the effect of citizen protest against corruption and, therefore, by implication, denigrated the effect of the work of WJXT. He contradicted that opinion, however, in several other sections of *Consolidation*.<sup>482</sup> For instance, when Martin wrote of WJXT's documentaries on the problems of city-county government and the station's early support of consolidation, he also said:

Yet WJXT made its most effective contribution to government reform in Jacksonville-Duval by a series of investigative news reports, begun early in 1965, which revealed irregularities in a wide range of municipal affairs. . . . These findings . . . alerted the public to conditions that had been ignored by local news media for years.<sup>483</sup>

Nonetheless, Martin's reluctance to credit WJXT as a primary force behind the push for consolidation continued into the late 1990s. He said in 1997, "I don't think

---

<sup>481</sup> Martin, *Consolidation*, 82-92.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.



consolidation would have succeeded if they [the Florida Times-Union] hadn't hired me, or someone like me. I don't think it would have succeeded if it didn't have the full endorsement and support of the newspapers. I don't think radio or television could have done it."<sup>484</sup> However, the evidence to be presented in this chapter shows that, had it not been for WJXT, other local media might have continued to ignore the area's political corruption problems. Had that been the case, it is probable consolidation would not have succeeded in 1967.

#### Other Issues Being Covered by the Press in the Mid-Sixties

As elsewhere in the country, two issues receiving heavy press coverage in Jacksonville were a war in Southeast Asia and a battle for civil rights in America. The Vietnam War was claiming lives, both U.S. and Vietnamese lives, at an alarming rate.<sup>485</sup> The Civil Rights movement was being covered daily.<sup>486</sup> One week before the consolidation vote, front-page stories in the *Florida Times-Union* included a report on

---

<sup>484</sup> Interview with Richard Martin, 30 November 1997.

<sup>485</sup> Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream*, 1022-1025.

<sup>486</sup> Wm. David Sloan, James G. Stovall, eds., *The Media in America* (Worthington, OH: Publishing Horizons, Inc., 1989), 375.

racial unrest in Chicago; Madison, Wisconsin; and Washington, DC,<sup>487</sup> as well as a story on the call by Senator John McLellan of Arkansas for a study on what was causing the disturbances.<sup>488</sup> In the paper's second section on the same day, the top story was a report on the deaths of six Jacksonville area servicemen killed while on duty aboard the U.S.S. Forrestal in Vietnam.<sup>489</sup> Another story on the same page listed the advantages the paper expected to accrue to Jacksonville because of the new Disney theme park in Orlando.<sup>490</sup> On the third page of the "B" section there was a story on consolidation in Nashville, Tennessee.<sup>491</sup> Nashville had been used as a model for formulation of some parts of Jacksonville's consolidation plan.

On 7 August 1967, the day before the consolidation vote, the consolidation story was placed at the bottom of the front

---

<sup>487</sup> "Negro Gangs Roam DC; No Shooting," *Florida Times-Union*, August 1, 1967, A-1.

<sup>488</sup> "Special Study of Riots Urged," *Florida Times-Union*, August 1, 1967, A-1.

<sup>489</sup> "Forrestal Casualty List Includes Six Local Men," *Florida Times-Union*, 1 August 1967, B-1.

<sup>490</sup> "Disneyworld to Aid Area," *Florida Times-Union*, 1 August 1967, B-1.

<sup>491</sup> "Nashville-Our Metro Model; How Goes Consolidation There," *Florida Times-Union*, 1 August 1967, B-3.

page of the *Times-Union*.<sup>492</sup> The story included mention of other consolidation stories inside the *Times-Union*. The story at the top of page one concerned racial problems in the North.<sup>493</sup> There was a story on the downing of an American fighter plane over North Vietnam.<sup>494</sup> On 8 August, the day voters were to go to the polls, the top story in the *Times-Union* estimated that 100,000 people would vote on consolidation.<sup>495</sup> It was accompanied by a front-page editorial in favor of consolidation.<sup>496</sup> Other front-page stories were about a group of black residents from Harlem demonstrating in the public gallery of the U.S. House to

---

<sup>492</sup> Richard Martin, "Consolidation Proposal Faces Final Test at Polls Tomorrow," *Florida Times-Union*, 8 August 1967, A-1.

<sup>493</sup> "Guardsmen Leaving Milwaukee as Detroit Emergency Ends," *Florida Times-Union*, 8 August 1967, A-1.

<sup>494</sup> UPI, "637<sup>th</sup> U.S. Plane Felled over North," *Florida Times-Union*, 8 August 1967, A-1.

<sup>495</sup> Maria Rasmussen, "100,000 Turnout Is Forecast Today for Merger Vote," *Florida Times-Union*, 8 August 1967, A-1.

<sup>496</sup> Richard Martin, "We Recommend Consolidation," *Florida Times-Union*, 8 August 1967, A-1.

protest House action killing a rat control bill,<sup>497</sup> and a report on the loss of five U.S. helicopters in Vietnam.<sup>498</sup>

On 9 August, the day after voters had approved consolidation for the Jacksonville area, the page one headline read, "Consolidation Scores Big Victory."<sup>499</sup> The margin of victory had been 2-1. The vote had made Jacksonville the biggest city in Florida in terms of square miles, the 29<sup>th</sup> largest in the country. Also on the front page were stories about a U.S. House-approved anti-crime bill, with a provision for \$25 million to be used for anti-riot training,<sup>500</sup> and a report on the shelling of North Vietnam by the U.S. Heavy Cruiser, St. Paul, and three U.S. destroyers.<sup>501</sup> Another front-page story noted that employment

---

<sup>497</sup> AP, "Negroes Stage Capitol Protest," *Florida Times-Union*, 8 August 1967, A-1.

<sup>498</sup> UPI, "Reds Down Five Copters Near Saigon," *Florida Times-Union*, 8 August 1967, A-1.

<sup>499</sup> Joe Sigler, "Consolidation Scores Big Victory," *Florida Times-Union*, 9 August 1967, A-1.

<sup>500</sup> UPI, "House Votes \$75 Million Anticrime Bill," *Florida Times-Union*, 9 August 1967, A-1.

<sup>501</sup> UPI, "Warships Shell Red Positions," *Florida Times-Union*, 9 August 1967, A-1.

in the United States was at a record high, with unemployment down to 3.9 percent.<sup>502</sup>

Deeper inside the paper was a picture of the current mayor of Jacksonville, Hans Tanzler, whose support of consolidation was part of the reason he would have to run again for his own job just a few months after his election under the old form of government. The picture showed the mayor having lunch with a group of Headstart students at Brentwood Elementary School the day before, while his future and the future of Jacksonville was being decided. While Jacksonville voters were casting their ballots, a relaxed Hans Tanzler was dining in the school cafeteria on spaghetti with cheese and meat sauce, tossed green salad, green peas, rolls and butter, frosted chocolate cake and milk.<sup>503</sup>

#### The WJXT School Editorials

WJXT-TV, WFGA-TV, the *Florida Times-Union*, and the *Jacksonville Journal* had all reported on the sorry state of Jacksonville's education system.<sup>504</sup> In part because the county tax assessor had refused to assess and tax property at

---

<sup>502</sup> UPI, "U.S. Employment Hits Record High in July; Decline Erased," *Florida Times-Union*, 9 August 1967, A-1.

<sup>503</sup> Allan Walker (photographer), No story caption, *Florida Times-Union*, 9 August 1967. B-10.

<sup>504</sup> Richard Martin, *Consolidation*, 37.

its true value, in part because the citizenry liked its free-rider status on taxes, the county school system had steadily declined. Schools were overcrowded; school buildings were run-down and dangerous; the school system was run almost independently of other governmental bodies. A study of the Duval County school system said the schools were part of the area's political machine. An education crusade by the media, warning that area schools were in trouble and in danger of being discredited, had little effect, and in 1964, all of Duval County's senior high schools were discredited.<sup>505</sup>

Although the poor school system in the Jacksonville area was not a direct part of WJXT's crusade on corruption and waste in the area's form of government, it was one of several issues that illustrated how poorly government was being run on which the station editorialized. It was one of the issues that would eventually result in voters showing their lack of faith in elected officials. The first editorial on Duval County schools came in November 1962:

The remarkable thing about Duval County's school problem is the way people are so casual about it. For years now, responsible groups and individuals have waved a danger flag about our sagging schools, but nobody stops to listen. . . . In the most recent case, the Community Development Program, which spent months studying all of

---

<sup>505</sup> Richard Martin, *Quiet Revolution*, 31-44.

the myriad problems of Jacksonville and Duval County, has put the public schools at the very top of a lengthy list of problems which urgently need attention. Could we ask for any stronger indictment than that?

The editorial went on to note that a \$79 million road program for Duval County had been "signed, sealed and delivered." Davis told viewers it was likely that few people had asked serious questions about the multimillion-dollar contract. A bond sale to raise \$63 million for the municipal electric system was likely to get the same rapid approval with only a cursory attempt to investigate the procedures involved.

What we have in this community is a dangerously misplaced sense of values. People are quick to scream if they are shortchanged on trading stamps, but almost nobody bats an eye when our youngsters are shortchanged at school by poor teachers or a shortage of materials. The penalty we will pay for this warped sense of what is important will be retarded development of the most valuable single resource our nation and our country can have--our children.

When will Duval County grow up to meet its clear and unmistakable duty?<sup>506</sup>

The problem was affecting Jacksonville students when it came time to move on to post high school education, said Davis.<sup>507</sup> The county's school system was getting fewer dollars from area taxpayers than any school system in the

---

<sup>506</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 15 November 1962.

<sup>507</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 19 June 1963.

state. It was also the only large metropolitan area in Florida without a state-supported community or four-year college.<sup>508</sup> Davis continued:

Not only does the quality of education in grades one through twelve leave something to be desired, because of inadequate support, but Duval County is sending less and less of its high school graduates on to higher education. In 1962, only thirty-two percent of this county's high school graduates enrolled in a college or university in Florida. The statewide average was fifty percent. This is a dangerous lag, in view of the growing demands of business and industry for more highly-trained individuals, plus the need for flexibility and re-training being forced on us by technological change.<sup>509</sup>

The lack was even more irresponsible, said Davis, because most of the cost of a higher learning facility would have been borne by the state, with a minimal contribution from the county. "At what point," wrote Davis, "will the people of Duval County get tired of being last in the state in the things that really count."<sup>510</sup>

Davis blamed some of the school problems on an inefficient tax system. When an attempt to right inequities in the appraisal system focused on the downtown areas of Jacksonville, rather than attempting to equalize assessments

---

<sup>508</sup> Ibid.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid.

<sup>510</sup> Ibid.



throughout the county, Davis once again warned that schools would suffer:

School officials repeatedly have warned that all high schools in the county will lose their accreditation in two years unless major improvements are made. On the financial side, this can be done only if the tax base is broadened considerably, yet the assessor is not able to say whether an equalization of downtown property will broaden the base at all. Many people feel, on the contrary, that the tax base might even be narrowed, which would eat into school and county revenues even more.<sup>511</sup>

The county tax assessor had claimed his plan to focus on downtown property tax appraisals would save citizens of the county hundreds of thousands of dollars. Davis called that a "false economy of the worst variety if it results in discredited schools and permanent damage to the children of this county." It was not piece-meal equalization that was needed, but a crash program to be applied county-wide, a program that would fund improvements in the county school system. "Without it," wrote Davis, "our sinking schools may drop right out of sight."<sup>512</sup>

Davis was also critical of the Duval County system of choosing a school superintendent. Duval was one of many counties in the state in which the school superintendent was

---

<sup>511</sup> Ibid.

<sup>512</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 27 September 1963.

elected. Only a handful of counties used a system that allowed members of the school board to select the superintendent. Those counties, said Davis, were, not so coincidentally, "ranked among the very best in the state." The counties in which school superintendents were appointed could choose from a pool that included candidates from all over the country. Sticking with the outmoded system of electing school superintendents meant that a candidate had to have been a resident of Duval County for the past six months and in the state for the past year. With the other requirements, such as a graduate degree and experience in school administration, there were very few choices. It was, editorialized Davis, another example of outmoded, inefficient government at work in greater Jacksonville.<sup>513</sup>

When Duval school officials attempted to shift the blame for a deteriorating school system to state government, Davis was having none of it:

Many of the people who want no part of a property revaluation program insist that the state legislature is at fault for not having provided Duval County with new tax sources for schools. What this argument says, in short, is that local government has met its responsibility, that state government has not.

The facts show, however, that just the reverse is true. In the first place, Florida's state government is far ahead of most states in terms of direct financial

---

<sup>513</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 3 October 1963.

support of public schools. On a nationwide basis, the average state contributes 39% of the operating funds used by local school systems. By contrast, the state of Florida provides about 53% of the money spent in the school systems of the various counties.<sup>514</sup>

Also, Davis told viewers, Duval County was the recipient of a higher percentage of school money than any other large county in the state. It was not the state's fault Duval County schools were suffering:

The real vacuum, of course, is in our local support of schools. In Duval, only 33% of the school budget is covered by local funds. Bear that 33% figure in mind as we compare it with other localities.

In Dade County, the local share is 61%. In Broward, 54%. In Orange County, 42% of the budget involves local money. In Pinellas County, the figure is 55%.<sup>515</sup>

Davis was continuing to build his case that systemic changes were needed in Jacksonville and Duval County.

Davis revisited the topic of Jacksonville schools in March 1964, lauding the president of School Bootstrap Action, Inc., a group attempting to promote changes in the school system. The Bootstrap Action president had blamed business and professional leaders in the community who had chosen not to get involved in the school improvement effort. Davis editorialized:

---

<sup>514</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 13 December 1963.

<sup>515</sup> Ibid.

One of the most disappointing aspects of the whole school debate has been the deliberate, willful absence of enough people who consider themselves leaders, in the front ranks of the fight to save our deteriorating school system. Warnings have filled the air--our schools are in imminent danger of losing their accreditation, responsible citizens and groups have sounded the emergency alarm over and over--but too many people are burying their heads in the sand and permitting the schools to suffer without registering even a protest.<sup>516</sup>

The editorials continued with a warning that the school system's problems were also the problems of the community at large, including those with businesses in the Jacksonville area. Offices were remaining vacant; payrolls and new jobs were declining because people in other areas who might have moved to Jacksonville were being frightened off by the deteriorating school system, afraid that if they brought their children to Jacksonville, the youngsters would be thrust into a system that encouraged school dropouts and juvenile delinquency. In a plea to community leaders who had stayed out of the fray, Davis implored, "It may not be easy to stand up and be counted, but if ever we had a problem which called for courage we have it now."<sup>517</sup>

As school conditions worsened in Jacksonville, Davis kept the pressure on. Schools were his topic again in May

---

<sup>516</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 4 March 1964.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid.

1964. As he had in his last editorial comment on the subject, Davis told the community that the result of a substandard school system meant the loss of jobs and income in Duval County. What was worse, he said, was the attitude that the system's decline should be ignored because to talk too much about it would tarnish the county's image:

This is a brand of logic which may make sense for politicians, but it is suicidal for a community. The best possible shot-in-the-arm for our "image" would be an excellent school system, but we will never achieve that so long as we try to hide our problem like it was a sick relative.<sup>518</sup>

That changes in the administration of the school system were necessary became even clearer when on 2 December 1964, just as Davis and others had warned, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools finally discredited Duval County schools. SACS Chairman Dr. Herman Frick of Florida State University said the schools had been discredited because they had failed to "correct major deficiencies caused by a lack of financial support."<sup>519</sup> Of the eight standards used by the SACS to judge a school system worthy of accreditation, Duval schools had failed to meet seven, including "having

---

<sup>518</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 28 May 1964.

<sup>519</sup> Charles Cook, "Duval Schools Discredited as SACS Rejects Final Appeal by Superintendent," *Florida Times-Union*, 3 December 1964, 1.

adequate hygienic conditions."<sup>520</sup> There is no editorial recorded for this date by Norm Davis, at least not in the material made available for this research. Given the record of Davis' editorials on the subject, however, it is likely that there was a Davis editorial on this subject in early December and that it urged improvement in the Duval County school system.<sup>521</sup>

Almost a year later, a joint decision by the current school superintendent, the school board, and the Duval County legislative delegation changed the Duval County school superintendent's position from elective to appointive, just as Davis had recommended for two years. Davis was almost jubilant:

When some future historian records the steps taken by Duval County to rebound from the disastrous blow of school disaccreditation, the story will point to March 17, 1965 as a red-letter day. Yesterday's announcement by school and legislative leaders that Duval will have an appointed school superintendent was a splendid move which will in time reap educational rewards for every school child in the system. . . .

Henceforth, Duval County will no longer bear a stigma as the only school system among the 20 largest in the nation still using the antiquated method which requires the superintendent to be a politician as much as an educator.<sup>522</sup>

---

<sup>520</sup> "7 SACS Standards Not Met by County," *Florida Times-Union*, 3 December 1964, 27.

<sup>521</sup> Duval County schools were re-accredited by SACS in 1979.

<sup>522</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 18 March 1965.

A small battle had been won in the effort to rid Jacksonville and Duval County of its inefficient, corrupt form of government.

#### City and County Services Deteriorate

At the same time, the city-county sewer and storm system was deteriorating because of neglect. Some improvements within the city had been made, but none outside city limits. The soil and the water supply were contaminated. The problem was so great that it endangered "the public health of the entire county."<sup>523</sup>

Citizens of the county were complaining about inadequate police and fire protection, the high cost of government, soaring taxes, and a rising crime rate. County residents were also angered by a system that forced them to pay premium rates for electricity produced by the Jacksonville electric department, a system that paid for approximately 75 percent of the city's operating expenses.<sup>524</sup> These were compelling reasons for Jacksonville area residents to consider a better form of government, but history was not on the side of

---

<sup>523</sup> Blueprint for Improvement, Local Government Study Commission of Duval County, Jacksonville, 1966, 135.

<sup>524</sup> Ibid., 147.

consolidation. Annexation had been voted down in 1963 and 1964. Both referenda indicated that, although Jacksonville residents favored some form of combination of governments, Duval County voters were still resisting becoming city taxpayers.

In January 1965, a group of community leaders, led by Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce President Claude J. Yates, drafted a manifesto asking the legislature to approve a referendum for consolidation.<sup>525</sup> In April, the Florida Legislature approved a bill to authorize a study of Jacksonville area government. The move toward consolidation was still not in high gear, but results of the study were to be presented to the Duval County legislative delegation on March 1. J.J. Daniel was elected Study Commission chairman. Daniel named Lewis Alexander (Lex) Hester executive director of the Study Commission. The 30-year-old Hester believed, as did Daniel, that consolidation was the area's future.<sup>526</sup>

The legislative act that created the Study Commission had made it mandatory that local government leaders cooperate with the Commission by turning over details of the workings and finances of their individual governments. Although some

---

<sup>525</sup> Martin, *Consolidation*, 54.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*, 58-61.



leaders of local governments acknowledged that reform was necessary, there was reluctance to provide full details of how their governments worked. There was still fear of being swallowed up, losing autonomy, and becoming taxpayers to a system that would use tax money for improvements in other communities. At public hearings held in the communities of Baldwin, Jacksonville Beach, Atlantic Beach, and Neptune Beach, resistance from the voting public and from local government leaders was obvious. After one such hearing, *Times Union* reporter Tom Hoey wrote, "If there are any people in Neptune Beach who favor countywide consolidation, they failed to show up at what was described as 'an old-fashioned town meeting' Thursday night in City Hall."<sup>527</sup> People already in government in both the county and the city had mixed reactions. Some were cautiously approving of a change of government; some were opposed because they feared they would lose their jobs if consolidation became a political fact.<sup>528</sup>

---

<sup>527</sup> Tom Hoey, "Most Neptune Residents at Meet Oppose Merger," *Times-Union*, July 14, 1967, B-1.

<sup>528</sup> *Florida Times-Union*, "Two Members of Council Endorse Consolidation," July 12, 1997, B-1.

The WJXT-TV Investigations

With politics, fear of loss of autonomy, and despair over the state of Jacksonville area services, there was another force at work. In 1965, WJXT-TV began a series of investigations and editorials criticizing government and exposing illegal activity. Following one documentary on the shortcomings of area law enforcement, the City of Jacksonville called in the International Association of Chiefs of Police to study the Jacksonville Police Department. The study corroborated the findings of WJXT.<sup>529</sup>

The station produced another documentary called "Government by Gaslight."<sup>530</sup> The name, "Gaslight," was chosen to illustrate that area government was outdated and inefficient and it was time for the area to bring its system of government up to date. "Gaslight" illustrated the overlapping governmental agencies within the city and county. It showed the waste in the redundant governmental structure. "Gaslight" demonstrated redundancies in many city and county agencies, including police, fire, sewer, prison, insurance

---

<sup>529</sup> Richard Martin, *Quiet Revolution*, 72.

<sup>530</sup> Aired 10 May 10 1965 and again on 2 August 1965. Also shown to various civic gatherings. Copy of program in researcher's possession (provided by The Louis Wolfson Media History Center at the Miami-Dade Public Library).

and vehicle maintenance. The program showed that the two tax assessors' offices sometimes had different estimates of the value of the same piece of property. The system, according to "Gaslight," caused not only duplication of departments, but also a lack of service for county residents. Although there was a building code in the city, there was none in the county. Although there was a library in the city, there was none in the county. Although there was a sewage treatment system in the city, there was none in the county. Drivers could become very confused if they were unaware of crossing the city line; right on red was allowed in the city, but not in the county.<sup>531</sup>

WJXT also told viewers that a majority of city employees lived outside the city, and, therefore, paid no city taxes, although their paychecks came from the city. The city airport was in the county. City sewage dumped into the St. John's river flowed across the city boundary into the county. The tone of the program was "if you live in the county, you are being shortchanged." This was an important point because it was county voters who had always been, and who were expected to be, the voters most resistant to changing

---

<sup>531</sup> "Government by Gaslight," special aired on WJXT-TV, 2 August 1965.

Jacksonville area government. Toward the end of "Gaslight,"

WJXT editorialized:

Perhaps the most serious symptoms of our governmental disease are political symptoms. Take the matter of political responsibility; within the complex layers of government in Duval County, buck-passing has become a way of life. The voter who wants to fix blame is confronted by a bewildering array of officials, all pointing their fingers at each other. The citizen who wants a job done often has to be a detective to track down the proper man to do it.

There's confusion between city and county on responsibility, and confusion within each one. Jacksonville, with its council and commission has a two-headed government no other city on earth has seen fit to copy.

Duval's scrambled government penalizes the individual too. Much good political talent lives out in the suburbs, disfranchised, unable to take part in the governmental life of the central city.

On the other hand, a multitude of people outside the city contribute heavily to various city budgets, through electric revenues, airport concessions, Gator Bowl tickets, but an accident of geography denies these people any voice in deciding how these millions of dollars will be spent. This is taxation without representation, pure and simple.<sup>532</sup>

"Gaslight" was not the last time WJXT viewers heard of the confusing city-county system of government in the area. Several months after the program was broadcast, and after it had made the rounds of various civic groups, Davis observed:

Much has been said of the bewildering structure of government within the City of Jacksonville, the bizarre Council-Mayor-Commission arrangement which causes political scientists and ordinary citizens alike to shake their heads in consternation. But keeping track

---

<sup>532</sup> Ibid.

of the seats of authority and responsibility in county government requires a scorecard which is even more baffling.

County government, remember, was devised in the last century when Florida's population lived in rural areas and very small towns, but today this loosely-connected cluster of boards, authorities, and officials is being forced to grapple with the enormous task of providing urban services for a huge metropolitan area.<sup>533</sup>

Davis sympathized with voters who faced ballots that included more than sixty offices in Duval County, in addition to state and city offices. It was impossible, he said, to know what the duties of all of these offices were. It was unlikely that one in ten thousand voters knew what he/she was voting for on election day. The system worked against informed participation in government by the citizenry.<sup>534</sup>

The editorial also charged that there would be no willing attempts from within the system to change it:

It goes without saying that virtually every officeholder in the court house will band with his colleagues to resist any change that might affect him, however ineffective the overall system may be. The Local Government Study Commission of Duval County has the difficult duty of cutting through whatever layers of self-interest may prevail to get at the root causes of confusing, costly, and ineffective local government.<sup>535</sup>

---

<sup>533</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 25 March 1966.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid.

<sup>535</sup> Ibid.

Davis expressed hope that the Study Commission would be able to come up with recommendations for a new form of government in the area that would be efficient, responsive, and understandable.<sup>536</sup>

Two weeks later, it was the city-run electric power system under the Davis editorial gun. Davis told viewers that the city was running one of the largest municipally owned power systems in America, with an annual budget of \$50 million--larger than all other city expenditures combined. Although the entire City Commission, according to the city charter, was supposed to be supervising the power company, in truth it was run by just one person, the budget commissioner. The system that had evolved under Jacksonville's form of government was "You run your departments, I'll run mine."<sup>537</sup>

Making matters worse, said Davis, was that under the then current system, the city had a monopoly on electric power for the entire area--unfair to those who lived outside the city limits because they had no say in electing city commissioners, including the budget commissioner. Davis commented, "This is a thoroughly illogical state of affairs

---

<sup>536</sup> Ibid.

<sup>537</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 11 April 1966.

which subjects a majority of electric customers to the dictates of a minority."<sup>538</sup>

The "illogical state of affairs" was another example of an outmoded, inefficient form of government in Jacksonville and Duval County, a system that needed change:

Since electric service is a countywide function it should in some manner be responsive to voters throughout the county. And because the provision of electric service is a technical and highly-complex operation involving immense sums of public money, some provision should be made for vesting policy decisions in a board of directors of some type which would have both the time and the ability to effectively supervise such a huge operation. We urge the local Government Study Commission to give this matter a high priority in its examination of governmental problems in Duval County.<sup>539</sup>

WJXT discovered another weakness in the Duval County bidding system, the subject of Davis' editorial on 18 May. Duval County had been paying 10.47 cents per gallon for asphalt supplied by Peninsula Asphalt. Peninsula had been the only bidder on county paving jobs for three years. Yet, WJXT, conducting an informal bid process of its own, had found other companies with prices as much as one-and-a-half cents lower per gallon than Peninsula. Davis tried to calculate the losses to taxpayers:

---

<sup>538</sup> Ibid.

<sup>539</sup> Ibid.

The substance of all this is that Duval county's bidding procedures have produced a price which is higher than the going rate to private business and at least one other county. It is impossible to calculate the tax money that has been wasted on asphalt in recent years, but with purchases of more than four million gallons involved, the loss must run into the thousands of dollars.<sup>540</sup>

The Commission soon announced it was planning to re-advertise for bids on asphalt, but only after WJXT had exposed a "weird set of circumstances which the commissioners have failed to explain."<sup>541</sup> The weird set of circumstances to which the editorial referred was the overpayment for asphalt when it appeared a straightforward system of competitive bidding would have led to substantial savings for the county.

The confusing array of governmental bodies in the city and county gave Davis and WJXT several other targets. On 15 August 1966, Davis turned his attention again to the Jacksonville City Commission: "If the amount of money wasted by the City of Jacksonville over the years on automobiles, insurance, electric utility poles, kerosene, and sundry other items could somehow be totaled, the figure would be astounding."<sup>542</sup> Davis said the grand jury had confirmed that

---

<sup>540</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 18 May 1966.

<sup>541</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 15 August 1966.

<sup>542</sup> Ibid.



the City Commission was responsible for "inexcusable conditions," but the City Council also shared blame because the Council approved the budget submitted by the Commission.<sup>543</sup>

The editorials and documentaries were intended to educate voters about government. WJXT's investigative reports added punch.<sup>544</sup> Each of the three elements was used to reinforce the others. In February 1965, WJXT reported on mismanagement of the city's automobile fleet. The cars were being bought without competitive bidding, were more expensive than they should have been and were frequently used for the private business of ranking city employees. On the evening newscasts on Friday, 9 April 1965, editorial director Norm Davis said:

A series of special reports by WJXT News on the City of Jacksonville's automobile fleet has delineated an incredible picture of extravagance and poor policy, which seems to be a casually accepted feature within the

---

<sup>543</sup> Generally speaking, the City Council was responsible for overall, city-wide issues, such as the budget; city commissioners were responsible for specific areas of city spending, such as highways and utilities. There were five city commissioners, nine city council members. Additionally, there were Duval County offices to consider. It is easy to understand why Davis had said in an earlier editorial that only one in 10 thousand voters was likely to understand the ballot. This confusing governmental setup may have made it difficult for viewers to understand Davis' editorials, but it is also likely that very confusion served to reinforce the perception that consolidation was needed.

<sup>544</sup> Martin, *Consolidation*, 77.

city administration. The taxpayers of Jacksonville literally are being taken for a million-dollar ride which, by any reasonable standard, should cost less.

The city has enough luxury cars to accommodate a battalion of visiting potentates. . . . These high-priced prestige cars are parceled out like ripe plums to department heads and lower ranking employees while the City seemingly looks down its nose at less expensive models. . . .

At least two Commissioners frankly concede that they favor their friends with the City's car business. . . .

Commissioner Smith has acknowledged that a saving of \$200,000 is possible if a different system were in use, and we believe that even greater economies are within reach.

The central question at this point is whether the most efficient management of the public's business is being realized. . . .

Or is \$200,000 petty cash which is not worth getting excited about?<sup>545</sup>

In another editorial several days later, WJXT

highlighted some of the problems with the layers of government in Jacksonville:

The Jacksonville City Council prides itself on being a watchdog over the city's financial affairs, but on the matter of extravagance and poor policy concerning Jacksonville's automobile fleet the watchdog has put its tail between its legs and slipped away.

WJXT News sampled the views of five Council members on such questions as the absence of formal competitive bidding on car purchases and the widespread use of luxury cars and expensive accessories by department heads and lower-ranking employees. To a man, those Councilmen interviewed passed the buck to the City Commission. Council President Clyde Cannon's remarks were typical. "We have nothing to do with it," he said. "We're the appropriating group and they are the administrators." . . .

---

<sup>545</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 9 April 1965.

It is plain that the Council is afraid to tangle with the Commission on the question of automobiles, and the net effect is that the highly-touted check-and-balance system is just an empty phrase. We might even wonder, under such conditions, whether the need for separate legislative and administrative bodies is real.<sup>546</sup>

The next week, another Davis editorial on the city's automobile purchasing practices highlighted a three-page letter from Council Attorney Harry Fozzard to Council President Cecil Lowe. Fozzard had written that City Commission decisions on the purchase and use of city automobiles were not the Council's business. Davis used that position to continue to build his case for streamlining government. Davis said, "[I]f they are not the Council's business, then we ask again whether there really is need for a separate legislative arm in the city."<sup>547</sup>

Davis told WJXT viewers it was within the Council's power to reduce money for budgeted items submitted by the Commission, or to delete those items from the budget altogether. However, said Davis, Council members were guilty of shirking their responsibility:

This is precisely the power that makes the Council a watchdog over the city's financial mess. It is highly significant that disclosures of lavish spending on city

---

<sup>546</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 16 April 1965.

<sup>547</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 22 April 1965.

automobiles have not produced any visible concerns on the part of the City Council. . . .

Not only has the watchdog been caught with its tail between its legs, it seems to want to leave it there.<sup>548</sup>

Within a week, the City Council had responded to the pressure to exercise some control over budget matters, writing two ordinances and a resolution to produce a city car pool, along with other changes in budget procedures. Davis congratulated commissioners but kept the pressure on:

As far as they go, the new procedures will make inroads on a spoils system which has prospered at taxpayer expense for a great many years. And yet the biggest hole in the dike through which tax dollars can continue to flow has not yet been plugged. Neither the Commission nor the Council has taken any overt steps to alter a policy which has condoned the purchase of more than a hundred high-priced luxury cars and a long list of expensive accessories for these and other vehicles. In spite of all the rules adopted this week, there is no overall policy which requires the use of compact cars and other lower-priced vehicles and no regulation of the purchase of costly "extras" throughout the automobile fleet.

Davis urged taxpayers to become concerned about a city policy of providing automobile allowances to more than 200 employees, even though some of those employees did not use cars in their work. There were also sixty-nine city employees with gasoline credit cards, said Davis, who would not need those cards if the city put new rules into effect. Davis wrote that it was encouraging the Council had finally

---

<sup>548</sup> Ibid.

taken some action and it was now time to take similar action on other serious problems in the city.<sup>549</sup>

The WJXT editorial criticism of Jacksonville's vehicle fleet practices was not over. The 6 May editorial said the surface had only been scratched and then went on to deplore the actions of some city commissioners who had arranged for city cars to be bought from their friends without competitive bidding.

Throughout all of this, a not unusual reaction from the officials has been to point the finger of blame at somebody else or to register shock that any criticism should arise. Many unsound procedures have been defended not only on the grounds of their having been used for many years and not because of an inherent value. In some cases, the law has been looked on as something to be applied when convenient. As one commissioner put it to the legislative delegation, "We feel like we have not been violating the intent of the law--except in a few instances like buying cars."<sup>550</sup>

Competitive bidding came up again when the City of Jacksonville purchased a \$55,000 crane-truck from a Jacksonville area company. The city had not bothered to ask vendors for bids. Once again, officials were trying to use the system to duck blame:

Pinning down responsibility for the deal has been like trying to catch an agitated ping-pong ball. Commissioner Broadstreet has disclaimed any part in the

---

<sup>549</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 29 April 1965.

<sup>550</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 6 May 1965.

arrangement, saying it was executed while Mayor Ritter was still Commissioner of highways and sewers. The Mayor, meanwhile, has turned up a letter signed by Broadstreet in January 1965 which closed the deal for the city with the local supplier. Yet at the time the negotiations took place, Ritter was the elected official in charge and Broadstreet was employed as city engineer, which seems to plant the responsibility for policy decisions at the time at Mr. Ritter's feet.<sup>551</sup>

Furthermore, commented Davis, there was no agreement among city officials over whether the crane had been leased or purchased. Various offices within the city were offering differing opinions on the transaction. If the lease assertion was true, the city would have paid out almost the full price of the crane-truck by the end of the first year's lease, and would have nothing to show for it, making it "the most unbelievably expensive lease we've ever heard of."<sup>552</sup>

By taking competitive bids for a crane-truck three months after the deal had been closed, city officials had made themselves look even more corrupt than they might have if they had simply admitted making the transaction without competitive bidding.

WJXT also produced a series of reports on the insurance purchasing policies of Jacksonville.<sup>553</sup> The city's insurance

---

<sup>551</sup> Norm Davis, WJXT Editorial, 11 March 1966.

<sup>552</sup> Ibid.

<sup>553</sup> Martin, *Consolidation*, 78.

premiums would amount to \$1.3 million for 1966. That was more than the combined insurance premiums for Miami, Tampa, and St. Petersburg. WJXT called for a grand jury investigation. The station criticized the grand jury's lack of action up to that point, and there was criticism by the station of other Jacksonville media, which had failed to shine light into the dark recesses of local government.<sup>554</sup>

#### The Grand Jury

On 16 May 1966, Circuit Court Judge Marion Gooding also called for a grand jury investigation. He asked that the charges brought by WJXT be investigated. It is not clear if he specifically mentioned WJXT. *Florida Times-Union* reporter Richard Martin has indicated Gooding did refer to WJXT. However, another *Times-Union* reporter, J.C. Green, wrote: "Judge Gooding didn't say so, but the probe was obviously inspired by a recent series of programs on television station WJXT, Channel 4, mainly accusing officials of wrongdoing."<sup>555</sup>

---

<sup>554</sup> Martin Waldron, "TV Station Stirs Florida Inquiry," *New York Times*, July 31, 1966. News director Bill Grove was quoted as saying of the city's two major newspapers, "They simply were not doing the job in the community."

<sup>555</sup> J.C. Green, "Grand Jury Probe Into Alleged City Waste Is Ordered," *Florida Times-Union*, 28 May 1966, A-1.

In either case, the WJXT reports clearly helped bring about the grand jury's investigation.

In its first presentment, on 30 June, the grand jury reiterated what WJXT had said in the station's reports on Jacksonville's insurance practices. The grand jury laid the blame squarely at the feet of city officials, saying:

Manifestly, such excessive cost is a flagrant and shocking waste of public funds, which unwarranted expenditure is directly chargeable to the inexcusable neglect and lack of concern evidenced by our city commissioners. . . . We want to make it clear we are not criticizing a simple mistake or an error in human judgment. We are condemning a calculated course of conduct indulged in by the commissioners..with the apparent full knowledge that it was contrary to the best interest of the taxpayers and citizens.

So far, there were no indictments.<sup>556</sup>

#### The Indictments

The first indictments came on 22 July 1966. Thirteen indictments were brought against two city councilmen and a former recreation department employee. The charges were larceny, conspiracy, and perjury. The three men had allegedly bought television sets, watches, and other items for their own use and charged the merchandise to the Recreation Department. The three were also accused of lying

---

<sup>556</sup> Richard Crouse, "Commission Played on City Insurance; Jurors Condemn Actions," *Times-Union*, 1 July 1966, A-1.



to the grand jury when they had appeared.<sup>557</sup> Other indictments would follow.

On 12 August, jurors issued another report. There were no indictments at this time, but the grand jury was critical of almost the entire government of Jacksonville, accusing city officials of wasting taxpayers' money, especially in the purchasing and use of city cars. There was no poor judgment, according to the grand jury; there was willful disregard of the public interest. Many city officials had used the local government as a personal source of income.<sup>558</sup>

#### Corn Patch Camp

City Commissioner Dallas Thomas resigned when the grand jury began investigating his alleged use of city vehicles and other property for his own use, especially his use of city equipment at his hunting getaway, called "Corn Patch Camp." WJXT had sent reporter John Thomas and Director Windsor Bissell to the camp to determine if reports of Commissioner Thomas' use of city property at his camp were true. Bissell recalled in 1997 that he and reporter Thomas had gone to "Corn Patch Camp," in Nassau County. They had heard that

---

<sup>557</sup> Martin, *Consolidation*, 82.

<sup>558</sup> J.C. Green, "Grand Jury Blasts City in Car Purchases, Use," *Times-Union*, 13 August 1966, A-1.

city commissioner Dallas Thomas was using city equipment and city prisoners at the camp. Bissell explained:

We stumbled into their camp saying we needed gasoline for a vehicle or something of the sort, and he had a big tent and a house out there and everything. And, sure enough, there were some prisoners in there who were cooking food for the campers. They were trustees, I'm sure, but you could tell they were prisoners. They still had the garb on. There was a city tractor on the property; it still had its city tag on it. There was a city truck pulled up there. I guess it was used for hauling stuff. Everything we'd heard was true and we got film of it.<sup>559</sup>

Then, several days later, Bissell and John Thomas went to "The 'P' Farm," the city prison.

We couldn't go there and say, "We came here to look for the tractor." We had some other excuse for being on the "P" Farm. The guy was showing us around and showing us how they slaughtered the pigs and made hams. He'd even tell us they handed the hams out to the commissioners every Christmas. And, sure enough, there was the tractor. They'd brought it back in. We got film of it.<sup>560</sup>

Reporter Thomas remembered it much the same way:

I'll never forget. We took a videographer, or photographer at the time; it was deep in the woods. We went up there in my car because it was not a marked news car. I remember the fear we had going in there, some of the looks from some of the local people who were watching us in these back woods heading toward that lodging camp.<sup>561</sup>

---

<sup>559</sup> Interview with Windsor Bissell in Atlantic Beach on October 10, 1997.

<sup>560</sup> Ibid.

<sup>561</sup> Interview with John Thomas in Tallahassee on 8 November 1997.

While on a dirt road on the way to the Corn Patch Camp, Thomas saw a tractor coming toward him. Thomas recalled, "I thought the fellow was going to ram me and push me through the woods because he was very antagonistic and apparently he was a caretaker for Commissioner Thomas."<sup>562</sup>

Reporter Thomas and Bissell crept up to the hunting camp, looked inside several huge tents that had been set up, and saw dozens of bunk beds that had "City Prison Farm" labels on them, and there were other items of city property. "We started looking at refrigerators and gas grills and everything seemed to have a city label on it."<sup>563</sup>

In subsequent visits, Thomas and other investigators spotted city prisoners doing the cooking and cleaning at the camp. There was even heavy machinery "borrowed" from the City Prison Farm.

The most obvious thing that caught our eye when we first went there and let us know right away we were on the right track, this was accurate, what we were trailing--at least one, as I recall, city truck, a dump truck, was there and the city logo was emblazoned boldly on the door and we filmed that. And there was a tractor there as I recall, maybe a front-end loader or some kind of a back hoe. That had a city logo all over it. The thing about it was, it was so blatant.<sup>564</sup>

---

<sup>562</sup> Ibid.

<sup>563</sup> Ibid.

<sup>564</sup> Ibid.

The next time Thomas remembered seeing the machinery was when he visited the city prison farm. He speculated that caretakers at the farm saw him and his photographer "snooping around."<sup>565</sup>

The John Thomas report on WJXT laid it all out for the viewer. After setting up the background of the story and how the reporters got to the camp, Thomas said:

WJXT reporters found on Commissioner Thomas's camp this [film] dump truck bearing city license tag number 5062. According to records at the city garage, the truck is owned by the City of Jacksonville and is assigned to the Agriculture Department, which is also under the direction of Commissioner Thomas. . . .

On another trip made into Nassau County, to Dallas Thomas's "Corn Patch Camp," WJXT reporters spotted this [film] \$5,000 Pontiac Bonneville with city license tag number 4966.<sup>566</sup>

Commissioner Thomas told the reporters later that he took his city-assigned car on personal (hunting) business because it was equipped with a two-way radio, and he did not want to be out of reach in the event of an emergency. He also said no other equipment had been used at his hunting camp. Yet, the reporters went to the camp on 14 December and filmed a farm tractor. The John Thomas report said, "The

---

<sup>565</sup> Ibid.

<sup>566</sup> Script of a WJXT "Special Report" obtained from Norm Davis. Script is undated, but obviously the story ran soon after 14 December. The [film] designations were in the original script and indicated where film began and ended.

same tractor was filmed again today, this time back in its shed at the city prison farm, which, incidentally, is only twenty-odd miles from Commissioner Thomas' s hunting camp."<sup>567</sup> Thomas also recounts that city officials used prisoners to landscape their yards. WJXT filmed that, too, and later broadcast the film.<sup>568</sup>

The following August, Commissioner Thomas was indicted on forty counts of grand larceny. The indictment said he had stolen almost \$24,000 from the city in the previous five years. Then, City Auditor John W. Hollister, Jr., was indicted, also for grand larceny. City Council President Lem Sharp refused to waive immunity in his testimony before the grand jury. He complained, "It seems most peculiar that for selfish profit or gain our news media would be a party to costing the taxpayers of this city hundreds of thousands of dollars in adverse publicity concerning matters that the grand jury itself admits there is nothing wrong with."<sup>569</sup>

The statement was nonsensical because Sharp was reacting to grand jury criticism of his refusal to waive immunity. Less than two weeks after the statement, Sharp was indicted

---

<sup>567</sup> Thomas interview.

<sup>568</sup> Ibid.

<sup>569</sup> Jacksonville Journal, October 6, 1966.

for stealing more than \$8,500 from the city. The next day, on 21 October, city commissioner Claude Smith, Jr., was booked into county jail on bribery charges. He had allegedly accepted more than \$13 thousand to influence his actions, particularly in city purchases of heavy equipment.<sup>570</sup>

When the grand jury term ended, two of Jacksonville's five city commissioners had been indicted; four of nine city councilmen had been indicted; the city auditor and the city recreation chief had been indicted. The tax assessor had resigned.<sup>571</sup> It was an impressive record for the grand jury, and for the television station generally acknowledged as being responsible for the grand jury investigation.

Grand jury members made it clear in their final report what they thought should happen next: "We recommend a complete revision of the governmental structure of the City of Jacksonville."<sup>572</sup>

#### What The People Involved Say About WJXT's Role

Hans Tanzler was mayor of Jacksonville in the period immediately preceding consolidation, as well as during the period immediately following consolidation. He was first

---

<sup>570</sup> Martin, *Consolidation*, 88.

<sup>571</sup> Ibid.

<sup>572</sup> Ibid.

elected on 23 June 1967 in the wake of the indictments against Jacksonville city officials, defeating incumbent mayor Lou Ritter by a margin of 7-2.<sup>573</sup> He had ridden a reputation as a tough, fair judge in Duval County Criminal Court and a public disquietude with government into office. He was in the unusual position of favoring a new government plan that would mean he would have to run again for office within a few months of his victory. Nonetheless, he made his approval of consolidation known. Tanzler's imprimatur was a factor in the eventual consolidation victory. However, Tanzler said in 1997 that had it not been for WJXT, consolidation would have never "gotten off the ground." The WJXT investigations, said Tanzler, were key to the consolidation process. Tanzler put it this way:

Without that [the WJXT investigations], they probably wouldn't ever have gotten around to even signing the petition manifesto to the legislature to reform the government. There wasn't enough righteous indignation to rise up and extricate themselves from the morass. . . . It started with the investigation that ended up with the indictments and the disaccreditation and all the rest of the business. The impetus, the genesis would probably have never taken place. No reason for it."<sup>574</sup>

---

<sup>573</sup> Ibid., 181

<sup>574</sup> Personal conversation with former Mayor Tanzler, 7 November 1997.

Richard Martin, in his book, *Consolidation*:

Jacksonville, Duval County, published in 1968, acknowledged that:

[T]hroughout 1965 and 1966 support for local governmental reform in Jacksonville and Duval County came most strongly and vocally from television station WJXT (owned by Washington Post-Newsweek interests). When Claude Yates summoned community leaders to draw up the manifesto calling for consolidation in 1965, WJXT gave vigorous and unqualified editorial support to the proposal."<sup>575</sup>

WJXT News Director Bill Grove told Martin in 1968:

From our point of view, support of consolidation was simply a continuation of something we tried to start back around 1960. In our judgment all local media at that time, including another television station and two daily newspapers were under common ownership, were glossing over the essential problems of the metropolitan area by generally ignoring them in their editorials and by contenting themselves with superficial reporting of the news."<sup>576</sup>

Martin also acknowledged that WJXT was an important force in consolidation. He wrote in *Consolidation*: "They were very important. I think they got the whole ball rolling and alerted the community to some of the problems."<sup>577</sup>

Martin stated in *Consolidation* that citizen reaction to municipal scandals and corruption can be ruled out as the

---

<sup>575</sup> Martin, *Consolidation*, 76.

<sup>576</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, 76

<sup>577</sup> Personal conversation with Richard Martin, 15 October 1997.



"major element in the consolidation referendum."<sup>578</sup> By implication, WJXT could be ruled out as the major element in the consolidation referendum. It is apparent he believed he and the Times-Union were more critical, if not the most critical, factors in the successful campaign for consolidation. Martin said, "I was brought in the first of January 1967. It was going along before that and I picked it up and ran away with it, I think, but none of the other facilities had the power or the impact that the Times Union had back then."<sup>579</sup> Martin said he was not only working for the newspaper, but he had also been "brought in" by the Consolidation Study Commission to promote consolidation. Martin recalled that his involvement with the consolidation campaign began this way:

I was down at Silver Springs doing PR work at the time and I watched the papers and all of a sudden they started printing little excerpts from "The Blueprint for Improvement," which was the Study Commission's plan for consolidation and what would happen.

But Martin complained that the "little excerpts" were not being placed properly in the paper, that they were not effective. He then wrote a letter to J.J. Daniel, the chairman of the study commission, saying:

---

<sup>578</sup> Martin, Consolidation, 234.

<sup>579</sup> Martin Interview.

'If you're going to do it this way, you can forget it.' I told him how it should be handled and what should be done and they hired me away from Silver Springs on a special contract to ramrod a more dynamic campaign and from that minute on I was churning out copy every day and eventually it got so hot that I was placing the copy where I wanted in the paper. I wrote an occasional editorial and placed it on the front page. I had complete autonomy in running this campaign and the whole of the media joined in, all of the TV and radio stations and so forth.<sup>580</sup>

That is not the way former WJXT employees remember the years and months leading up to the 1967 consolidation vote. Editorial Director Norm Davis said in 1999 he felt "all alone out there," and he said this about the role the *Times-Union* was playing in revealing government corruption:

I don't want to malign Richard Martin. I sure as hell will malign the *Florida Times-Union*. ...In those days, it was a disgrace to the industry. In that period, the '50s and '60s, the *Florida Times-Union* was just a rag because it didn't begin to try to fill its role as a news medium. It was beholden to too many other interests and Channel 4 [WJXT] was beholden to nobody. I think it was owned by the railroad, as I recall. Also the people who ran the paper just didn't have the courage to get out and do the hard things. It was not easy to get out and do what Channel 4 did. It sounds, as you look back on it, like a lark, but it was nothing of the kind. It was very difficult and demanding and emotionally draining kind of work. To do good journalism is hard work and when you're doing exposes like that in a community that hardly knew what the word meant, it was doubly difficult, and you were all alone out there. That station when it was doing these things was all by itself, in terms of media and in terms of community institutions. There were a lot of good people at work who applauded us and helped a great

---

<sup>580</sup> Ibid.

deal and sent us materials and things like that, but the institutions of the community were not responsive to these problems. Now, once stuff began to be laid bare on the record then the *Times-Union* began to wake up and they certainly printed all the big stories about the grand jury and the indictments and the scandals at City Hall and all that, but they were just reporting on stuff that they did little or nothing to contribute to.<sup>581</sup>

Davis recalled that the other major television station in town, WFGA, was also just a bystander in the effort to uncover unscrupulous behavior in area government. Davis said, "They were just reporting fires and burglaries and drownings and fireworks displays."<sup>582</sup>

Windsor Bissell said, also in 1997, that WFGA did not do anything investigative because the roster of its board of directors read like the Chamber of Commerce. He told it this way:

They weren't going to rock the boat. They were doing lots of animal stories, and so on, but nothing investigative. The newspaper didn't do anything. It was owned by the railroad. Some of the City Council members worked for the railroad.<sup>583</sup>

John Thomas remembered the same railroad connection between Jacksonville's newspapers, the *Times Union* and the

---

<sup>581</sup> Interview with Norm Davis, 6 October 1997.

<sup>582</sup> Davis interview.

<sup>583</sup> Bissell interview.

Jacksonville Journal, which published morning and afternoon respectively. Thomas confirmed Bissell's words:

As far as I'm concerned, the newspapers in the town were owned lock, stock and barrel by the railroads, the Atlantic Coast Line, the Seaboard and the Flagler System. They owned all the stock of the newspapers, two of them there, the Jacksonville Journal and the Times Union and as far as we were concerned, they were not doing the job they should have been doing. They were glossing over most of these things.<sup>584</sup>

Thomas also remembered that there was widespread disapproval in the conservative Jacksonville business community of a television station that was "stirring up all this trouble." Thomas recalled that, at first, WJXT was on its own in exposing illegal activities by elected and appointed officials, that he and other reporters at the station were sometimes afraid to turn the keys in their automobile ignitions when they left work at night. He felt, however, that it was the work of WJXT that made the difference between victory and defeat for Jacksonville consolidation. "I believe to this day," said Thomas,

that if there hadn't been such widespread corruption exposed and publicly on the airwaves because people were now really turning to television for their news more and more and right into their home every night and so very dramatic, and I really don't think that people...could have been swayed in favor of consolidation had it not been for the exposure. People just got fed up.<sup>585</sup>

---

<sup>584</sup> Thomas interview.

<sup>585</sup> Ibid.

What Others Have Said About WJXT's Role

Martin's view that the role played by WJXT was of less import than other factors has been refuted not only by those who were working for the station at the time but also by newspapers and magazine reports on the issues swirling around Jacksonville government. The *Clearwater Sun* reported that WJXT's work stood out like a "lighthouse for good government."<sup>586</sup> Today (Cocoa) credited WJXT with triggering the investigative mechanism of the grand jury.<sup>587</sup> The *Fort Lauderdale Sun* called WJXT's efforts "the beginning of the end for the old government." The *Sun* also noted that it was the television station, and not the other media in Jacksonville, that climbed on the story first.<sup>588</sup>

The Radio-Television News Directors Association Bulletin called the newspapers of Jacksonville "sleepy and timid" and applauded WJXT's reports that by September of 1966 had led to

---

<sup>586</sup> "It's the Silly Season Again," Editorial, *Clearwater Sun*, 19 April 1967.

<sup>587</sup> Walker Lundy, "An Aggressive Grand Jury Drops Political Bombs," *Cocoa (Today)*, 30 October, 1966.

<sup>588</sup> Anne Kolb, "Business Led Duval, Jax Union," *Fort Lauderdale Sun*, Vol. 59, No. 145 (date unreadable on researcher's copy).

the indictments of three city officials.<sup>589</sup> A WJXT press release from 1967 quoted stories complimentary to the station in *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *The Miami Herald*, *The St. Petersburg Times*, *Backstage* and other publications. For instance, *Newsweek* magazine said:

Long rife with rumors of deep municipal corruption, Jacksonville had never seen the likes of this before. That it saw it at all was due almost entirely to the consistent policy of hard-hitting reporting practiced by station WJXT.<sup>590</sup>

There were letters from viewers, noting that WJXT had stood alone in exposing government malfeasance. John Gaillard of Jacksonville wrote:

The public conscience of Jacksonville, Florida has at last grown some vocal chords. While the local newspapers continue to peddle government inspected (and approved) pap, and the radios "bop" themselves to oblivion, WJXT has chosen to face forthrightly the uncomfortable facts of Jacksonville life.<sup>591</sup>

A member of the legislature, who was later to become governor of the state, wrote to News Director Bill Grove to

---

<sup>589</sup> Edward W. Barrett, "Once Opposed, Columbia Dean Okays Editorials," *RTNDA Bulletin*, September 1966.

<sup>590</sup> Press release from WJXT, 1967, made available by Mary Grove, Mister Grove's widow.

<sup>591</sup> John Gaillard to WJXT, 1 July 1960. Copy in researcher's possession, provided by Norman Davis.

praise the station for its efforts.<sup>592</sup> State Representative Lawton M. Chiles, Jr., said in his brief letter:

Just a note to congratulate you and Norm Davis on the recognition that your station has received from Newsweek and TV Guide for the series that you have been doing on City and County Government. . . .I wonder how long the paper is going to sit back and let you do all of the work.<sup>593</sup>

All three of the former WJXT journalists interviewed for this research said Grove was the driving force behind the station's efforts, the one who made sure the investigations continued, even when there was pressure to back off. Norm Davis said:

I was a young guy and none of us knew what we were doing. We just had to go do it. When things began to heat up, it took some real courage to stand up to the heat and Bill stood right up and taught me what courage was all about. He was the linchpin in all this. I was just the guy out there firing the guns, but Bill was the guy plotting the strategy."<sup>594</sup>

The evidence seems to refute Richard Martin's view that WJXT's investigative reports were not of key importance in approval of consolidation by Jacksonville area voters.

---

<sup>592</sup> Lawton Chiles moved on to the Florida State Senate in 1966, the U. S. Senate in 1970, and was elected governor of Florida in 1990, serving in that post until his death in 1998.

<sup>593</sup> State Representative, Lawton M. Chiles, Jr., to Bill Grove, 26 September 1966. Copy provided by Norm Davis.

<sup>594</sup> Davis interview, 6 October 1997

Newspaper, magazine and journal reports from the time period give WJXT the lion's share of credit for spurring the community and community leaders to action. Examination of the *Florida Times-Union* reveals no record of other media in Jacksonville presenting investigative reports until after WJXT had taken a long lead. Martin said that in 1965 and 1966:

[S]upport for local governmental reform in Jacksonville and Duval County came most strongly and vocally from television station WJXT (owned by Washington Post-Newsweek interests). When Claude Yates summoned community leaders to draw up the manifesto calling for consolidation in 1965, WJXT gave vigorous and unqualified editorial support to the proposal."<sup>595</sup>

Citations of Martin's newspaper articles in Consolidation are all after 1966. He stated that he did not start working on consolidation until January 1967. Citations for *Times-Union* articles indicate that the newspaper was, as Norm Davis said, only reporting on events in which it had played no part. Yet Martin said, "It was going along before that and I picked it up and ran away with it, I think, but none of the other facilities had the power or the impact that the *Times Union* had back then."<sup>596</sup>

---

<sup>595</sup> Martin, *Revolution*, 71.

<sup>596</sup> Martin interview.



To the contrary, WJXT did have great impact on the community because it reached so many homes. Ratings for the station's 6 p.m. newscast in late 1967 showed more than three times as many people watching WJXT as its closest rival. The station had a staggering 75 percent share of the television audience.<sup>597</sup> That meant that at least 200,000 people were viewing WJXT's reports on government malfeasance.

There can be little doubt that Martin and the *Times-Union* were important contributing factors to the "yes" vote for consolidation. There can be little doubt that the newspaper was an important force in the community. However, the weight of the evidence points to WJXT as a much more important factor than Martin considered it to be. It is probable that without WJXT, Jacksonville would have continued to struggle under the old, inefficient, redundant, and corrupt form of government and that consolidation would have remained a dream for community leaders who thought the city and county deserved better.

---

<sup>597</sup> A.C. Nielsen report, 1965. Information from WJXT-TV.

CHAPTER 10  
JOE BRECHNER'S STRATEGY FOR ORLANDO, FLORIDA:  
THE 1960S CIVIL RIGHTS EDITORIALS OF WFTV-TV

It was just before noon when three young blacks took their seats at an F.W. Woolworth department store lunch counter in Jackson, Mississippi. The three young blacks and a white sympathizer were outnumbered more than a hundred to one by a crowd of several hundred whites inside the store who opposed lunch counter integration. Police who had been sent to keep the peace at the sit-in stayed outside the store, even as violence inside was beginning. The three black youths were knocked off their stools at the lunch counter. Anne Moody, Perlina Lewis, and Memphis Norman all crashed to the floor. Twenty-six-year-old former Jackson police officer Benny Oliver repeatedly kicked Norman in the face as he lay on the floor trying to protect himself. A white professor from Tougaloo Southern Christian College who had joined the blacks in their lunch-counter sit-in was hit in the face by another member of the mob. Professor John Salter's face was cut. Other whites poured salt and pepper into the wound and emptied catchup and mustard shakers on Salter's head. Oliver

continued his assault on Memphis Norman until blood was spouting from Norman's mouth and nose. It was May 28, 1963.<sup>598</sup>

The next night on WFTV-TV in Orlando, Florida, the station's news anchorman read an editorial written by WFTV's owner, expressing outrage over what had happened in Jackson:

What can we think of ourselves? What was said in your home, your office, your church, your club about the shameful incident at Jackson, Mississippi that we saw on television--or in the photograph in our morning newspaper? Was this America? Land of Liberty? Where a human being was physically humiliated and molested as he participated in a sit-in at a lunch counter, while other Americans laughed and jeered. Was this our sweet land of liberty, where human beings were squirted with mustard and catsup while local police looked on indifferently? Where is our conscience? Where are our hearts? Where the Godliness our ministers have preached. Whose cheek was turned: white or black? Whose voices will rise to protest? Where the courage to resist and overcome human injustice?

Do we dare sit by quietly, leaving law and order to the battering fists and stomping feet of Benny Oliver, a former Jackson lawman? We were silent before: when Nazis and storm troopers murdered 6-million human souls, when lynchers in pure white mocked justice. Speak up Americans! Your silence, not Benny Oliver's fists, is the greatest threat to our liberty. If there is any one of you whose soul revolted at the sickening, savage violence, send us a post card. Let us know that at least one other American felt as we did: sick at heart--dismayed--ashamed that this should happen here in the land of the free.<sup>599</sup>

---

<sup>598</sup> Jack Langguth, "3 In Sit-In Beaten at Jackson Store," *New York Times*, 29 May 1963, p. 1.

The station owner was Joseph L. Brechner, and although this plea for human rights and dignity may have been more impassioned than usual, no one who watched the station's evening newscasts on a regular basis could have been surprised that Brechner would express his outrage so strongly. During the years Brechner owned Channel Nine, which went on the air as WLOF-TV in 1958, then changed call letters to WFTV in 1963, civil rights was his most frequent editorial topic. Brechner estimated that he had been responsible for two thousand editorials between 1960 and the time he was forced to relinquish controlling ownership of the station in 1969.<sup>600</sup>

This chapter examines Joe Brechner's personal part in the civil rights struggle in Orlando, as well as his motivations for becoming a strong proponent of equal rights. It also reviews a set of themes, a strategy, in the Brechner

---

<sup>599</sup> Joe Brechner, "The Shame of Jackson," WFTV-TV editorial, 1 July 1963. Punctuation and grammar have been left as it was in the editorial copy.

<sup>600</sup> Joe. Brechner, "Until We Meet Again," Advertisement placed by Brechner in the *Orlando Sentinel*, informing viewers that he was being forced to turn over control of the station to another group while hearings were being conducted by the Federal Communications Commission to determine which of five groups would be awarded the operating license for WFTV-TV. *Orlando Sentinel*, March 1969.

editorials. Although there is no evidence to show that Brechner had planned a day-to-day editorial strategy in advance, his editorials reveal that he had settled on motifs that he considered important, and from those he developed a strategy for helping his community deal with one of the most important issues of 1960s America. This chapter also attempts to show that Brechner's efforts and his editorial strategy helped keep disturbances to a minimum in Orlando at a time when wholesale violence was hitting many other cities in Florida and the rest of United States.

In the first section of this chapter, Joe Brechner's motivations for editorializing are examined. Themes that ran through his civil rights editorials, along with examples of each theme are then included. Next, Brechner's work beyond editorializing is described.

#### Brechner's Motivations

Before exploring Brechner's strategy for promoting civil rights in Orlando, it is important to examine his background, to ask what it was in Joe Brechner's past, or upbringing, or education that caused him to take the civil rights lead in 1960s Orlando, Florida, a town in the deep south with all the apparent prejudices of other southern towns. Joe Brechner was born in Fall River, Massachusetts, on 18 May 1915. His

parents were immigrants to the United States from Russia and Romania. Both his father, Barney Brechner, and his wife's father, Joseph Brody, had escaped from Russia to avoid being shipped to the front lines in the Russo-Japanese War as Russia attempted to expand in Eastern Asia. It was customary for the Russians to put Jews on the front line, where they were certain to be killed. There was little choice for the two but to escape if they were to survive the war.<sup>601</sup>

Brechner's father died when Joe was thirteen. The family--his mother Dora, three sisters, and two brothers--moved to Detroit in 1928. The Brechners lived in a poor, racially mixed neighborhood at Division and Hastings. The neighborhood was peopled with colorful characters, such as Sam The Trombonik, who once tried to buy Joe's two younger brothers. It was Sam's idea to use the two boys as protection from other mobsters on the assumption that no one would fire at him as long as he was accompanied by two children. Sam The Trombonik was eventually shot and killed in a gangland-style killing in the Hastings/Division neighborhood.<sup>602</sup>

---

<sup>601</sup> Interview with Marion Brechner, 9 March 1998.

<sup>602</sup> Joe Brechner, *What I Always Say* (Orlando: By the author, 222 Pasadena Place, circa 1990), 60-62.

When World War II came, Brechner dropped out of college and went to Washington, DC, to become a civilian broadcast writer with the War Department. He later joined the United States Army, went to Officers Candidate School, and continued to write for the U.S. Army Air Corps, Office of Radio Production. Much of his work there was writing and producing programs about black servicemen.<sup>603</sup>

After the war, Brechner served as radio and television director of the Veterans Administration, working for General Omar Bradley. As the United States returned to peacetime conditions, Brechner teamed with old high school friend John Kluge to build a radio station just outside Washington in Silver Spring, Maryland. Radio station WGAY was the springboard for a career in broadcasting for both men. When Brechner and Kluge sold WGAY, they had seed money for the future.<sup>604</sup>

---

<sup>603</sup> Brechner's widow, Marion, has a collection of radio scripts written by Brechner during the war years. Many of the scripts deal with black servicemen.

<sup>604</sup> Interview with Marion Brechner, 9 March 1998. Kluge bought controlling interest in Metropolitan Broadcasting in 1959. It later became Metromedia. By 1984, the company's holdings had grown to TV stations in seven major markets, 12 radio stations, the Harlem Globetrotters and the Ice Capades. Kluge expanded into cellular phone operations. From 1959 to 1981, the company's stock rose from 69 cents a share to \$569, when adjusted for stock splits. Eventually, Rupert Murdoch acquired the stations for \$2 billion to form the backbone of

The Brechner Family Moves to Orlando

There were almost no facilities that could be described as "integrated" in Orlando when Brechner came to town in the early fifties to buy and operate a radio station and later to start and manage a television station. A station owner who proposed integrating facilities and treating all people as equals was certainly risking advertising losses. A white man in the deep South campaigning for civil rights on his television station was ahead of his time and out of place.

Joe Brechner's widow Marion said in a March 1998 interview that her husband's religion was the wellspring of his civil rights stance, as well as her own. It is a creed of Judaism to give, mitzvah, to take care of people less fortunate.<sup>605</sup> Mrs. Brechner said Joe Brechner was a member of

---

his Fox network. Kluge sold the cellular franchises for more than \$4 billion.

By 2000, Kluge was becoming a major entrepreneur in paging and cell phones and in constructing wireless cable television and telephone networks throughout Russia, the Baltic states, Eastern Europe and China. In doing so, at age 82, he was considered to be taking major risks with his \$7-billion fortune. He was the country's fourth richest individual as the owner of Orion Pictures; the Ponderosa and Bonanza restaurant chains; two Manhattan hotels, the Barbizon and the Radisson Empire; and professional soccer team, the MetroStars. "Rich, 82, and Starting Over," *New York Times*, 5 January 1997, 3,1; and Julia Reed, "The billionaire Who Just Won't Quit," *U.S. News & World Report*, 27 June 1988, 41.

<sup>605</sup> Ibid.



a minority and felt the pain of all minorities. In a note to Attorney Paul Dobin as Dobin was preparing a presentation on Brechner for the Federal Communications Commission, Brechner wrote of himself:

Mr. Brechner's sensitivity to the racial problems stem [sic] not only from his own background as a member of a minority group, but as a result of his early youth in Detroit where he lived in a hard-core Eastside area, primarily Black, at Hastings and Division Streets. He attended school with Blacks, and was aware of many difficult problems that are involved. During World War two, he became a specialist in problems related to the Black, and integration within the military service. He wrote the first network radio program about Blacks, which was broadcast on the then NBC network. . . . WLOF Radio, under his guidance, employed the first Negro disc jockey, not only in Orlando and Florida, but probably the entire South.<sup>606</sup>

As of the year 2000, Marion Brechner, in her mid-eighties, was president of Brechner Management in Orlando. The Brechners' son, Berl, oversaw management of the three radio stations and two television stations owned by Brechner Management. When asked what she did as president of the company, Mrs. Brechner said with a grin, "I manage." Marion Brechner's office was in a converted home in an older section of Orlando, north of downtown. It was a building Joe and Marion Brechner purchased to use as an office after losing control of WFTV. Flowers were visible from the windows year-

---

<sup>606</sup> Letter from Joe Brechner to Paul Dobin of Cohn and Marks, Washington, DC, 3 January 1974.

round. Marion Brechner worked at the desk that was once her husband's in a room replete with reminders of Joe Brechner. Pictures of Joe and Marion, one with Hubert Humphrey, occupied the desk top, along with pictures of their son and daughter-in-law, and pictures of their three grandchildren. Sitting in her late husband's black leather office chair, leaning forward on the desk, Marion said of the Brechners' dedication to the Civil Rights Movement:

Joe came from nothing; I came from nothing, and we had this mission to perform. We had to give, we had to help. Joe was always so proud of America, that it gave him a chance to be something [she whispers the word, "something," slowly, emotionally]. If our folks had stayed in Russia, they and we might have died. So, I think it was eternal gratitude that he was born here in a democracy and that there was nothing to fear from the soldiers, the government and whatnot, things like that.

We could identify with the Blacks, and Joe and I both came from the North, so we didn't have a Southerner's temperament about Blacks and we did have a concern that people should be treated like people [she pauses and stresses "people"], no matter what. I think this is what probably motivated him the most, that he came from nothing, that this country gave him a chance to be something.<sup>607</sup>

The Brechners had run into discrimination themselves. According to Marion, they had sometimes felt uncomfortable in situations with Gentiles. They had purchased a house in Maryland when they were first married, although the house had

---

<sup>607</sup> Interview with Marion Brechner, 9 March 1998.

a proviso that no Jews were allowed in the neighborhood. Marion Brechner said recently, "We bought it anyway. We said, 'The Hell with it. I'm going to live where I want to live.'" As Jews, they were also excluded from membership in the country club in Orlando when they came to town. Instances of discrimination such as those, according to Marion, sharpened Joe's sensitivity to cases of discrimination against others.<sup>608</sup>

Another influence in Brechner's life was the death of his father when Joe was thirteen. As the oldest of the three boys in the family, it fell to him to take his father's place, to help his mother support his two brothers and three older sisters. Marion Brechner says, "He didn't have time to be a young man as a young man." A college professor at Wayne State University in Detroit thought Joe was in his thirties, until Joe mentioned his age in a letter written to the professor. Joe was only eighteen.<sup>609</sup>

His position as a leader at such a young age, his position of responsibility, seemed to stay with him, to carry through to adulthood, when he and other Orlando leaders would

---

<sup>608</sup> Ibid.

<sup>609</sup> Daniel Hamilton Haines (Brechner's writing professor at Wayne State University), note to Brechner, commenting on a writing assignment, 27 January 1935.

take responsibility for making the city an exception in an era when civil rights advocacy was often met with violence. Brechner never forgot his family background. On the back of printed copies of each of his editorials broadcast on Channel Nine was a list of people to whom copies of the editorial should be sent; his mother's name was always on the list.

It was not only religion, not only family, that propelled Brechner on his way to a world beyond the neighborhood at Hastings and Division Streets. The Boy Scouts also played a big part in Joe Brechner's life. Joe attained the rank of Eagle Scout, and the organization was where he got his first encouragement as a writer when he won an essay contest.

The love of writing never left him. Marion recalled in a 1998 interview that Joe would have preferred to be Arthur Miller rather than Joe Brechner, "writing incessantly, interminably and always."<sup>610</sup> Former WFTV-TV news director Ray Ruester also remembered in a 1998 interview that writing was a passion for Brechner.<sup>611</sup> Ruester, then living in Ormond Beach, Florida, said, "Joe Brechner was a terrific writer. He always edited if he was there. In fact when I first

---

<sup>610</sup> Interview with Marion Brechner, 9 March 1998.

<sup>611</sup> Interview with Ray Ruester, 26 February 1998.

started writing editorials, I don't think he kept one word that I wrote."<sup>612</sup> It was Ruester who delivered the editorials that Brechner had written. Ruester was the news director and anchor-reporter at Channel Nine. When the topic was not of vital importance to Brechner, Ruester wrote the editorial, but Brechner checked and edited every one.<sup>613</sup>

#### Editorial Themes

Several themes run through the civil rights editorials of Joe Brechner (Table 2). Foremost is the theme of equal rights and equal opportunities for all. That is the foundation one would expect to find in editorials on this subject. But how did Brechner intend to impress upon his audience the importance of equal rights for all? What means of persuasion did he use in the attempt to convince viewers of his television station, and his editorials, that all Americans, not just the white majority, were meant to share in the freedoms and opportunities guaranteed by the constitution and the laws of the land? In addition to the overriding theme of fairness, there were four other thrusts to the Brechner strategy: (1) It could happen here; (2) Praise; (3) Patriotism; and (4) It's good business strategy.

---

<sup>612</sup> Interview with Ray Ruester, 23 April 1998.

<sup>613</sup> Ibid.

Table 2. Editorial Themes.

Theme	Example
It Could Happen Here	"Orlando has been a model community. . . . But the Committee and all citizens must now be alert to new and changing needs of minority groups. . . . These are the conditions that exploded into trouble in other cities."
Praise	"The football game last Thursday night in Orlando between Jones High School and Edgewater High school was an outstanding event in Central Florida. . . . The event reflected the maturity of our citizens, both adults and young people. It showed that integration not only can work here, but it can work unusually well."
Patriotism	"We speak glibly about defending democracy and liberty. While our youth fight enemies of Democracy overseas, those of us at home had better put ourselves openly on the firing line to resist and overcome the enemies of liberty in our own backyard."
Good Business Strategy	"Among those restaurants and hotels, theaters and other places of public accommodation in the South that have begun serving or hiring Negroes, only a few report suffering any lasting economic consequences. A sizable number, in fact, declare that business has been better than ever."

In driving home his point of "It could happen here," Brechner stressed that if Orlandoans did not work for peaceful integration, the city would experience the same

kinds of violence occurring in other United States cities such as St. Augustine, Tampa, and Jacksonville.

In employing the praise strategy, Brechner repeatedly praised Orlando and its citizens for not succumbing to the same kind of bigotry and hatred that were wracking other communities in the sixties. There were two prongs to the praise strategy. Some of his praise was aimed at Orlando's citizens; some of it was aimed at Orlando's leaders. In some editorials, when Brechner praised the community for its higher standard of behavior in civil rights matters, he was careful also to praise the city's leaders for being a part of the effort to make Orlando a better place for all.

Patriotism was a theme dear to Brechner's heart. Marion Brechner recalled that her husband was grateful for the opportunities he had had in America. He thought America was a great country because it was founded on the principles of equal opportunity for all. To violate that principle was un-American.<sup>614</sup> Brechner frequently made hate and extremist groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, targets of his editorials in order to stress that anyone who behaved as these groups did was not a good American.

---

<sup>614</sup> Interview with Marion Brechner, 9 March 1998.

In promoting civil rights as good business strategy, Brechner told his viewers that equal opportunity and equal rights were keys to a thriving community and that to deny civil rights to a certain segment of the population of the Orlando area would have caused economic harm to the community.

Brechner was employing a variation on an approach to civil rights explored by Ruben Burney in a master's thesis for Michigan State University.<sup>615</sup> In Burney's study, newspapers approached civil rights workers in one of three ways: (1) the Neo-Gandhian approach, which saw civil rights workers as "upright, dignified and justified"; (2) the Plague on Both Your Houses approach, which saw both civil rights workers and segregationists as extremists; and (3) the Misguided Troublemakers approach, which saw civil rights workers as causing problems where there should have been none. Brechner viewed civil rights workers as Neo-Gandhian; it was segregationists, such as members of the Ku Klux Klan, that were constantly cast in the light of misguided troublemakers.

---

<sup>615</sup> Ruben Burney, 11, "Newspaper Coverage of the Early 1960's Civil Rights Movement: A Content Analysis of World Views" (Master's thesis, Michigan State University, 1991), 8.



Examples of Editorials Using Brechner's  
Four Themes

It Could Happen Here

Brechner wrote about Ku Klux Klan troublemakers in an editorial about one of the many tragedies of the sixties. When bombs killed six children in Birmingham, Alabama, in September 1963, Brechner said on September 16, "It is a reminder to all fair and decent thinking citizens to avoid like the plague rabble rousers and hate-mongering organizations. Look out for the trouble makers who would solve racial and human problems with violence."<sup>616</sup>

Two Brechner themes are incorporated into this editorial. The word "fair" is used, as it was in so many of the editorials. There is also a warning to Orlandoans that the same kind of tragedy could strike central Florida:

The Alabama situation is a vivid reminder to all of us here that the attempt to solve racial problems in our state, in our area, is no child's game. It is a deadly serious business. It is also a reminder to city, county and state officials and to all law enforcement officers that firm and fair leadership and the strict respect and enforcement of laws is essential if race problems are to be solved fairly and satisfactorily.<sup>617</sup>

---

<sup>616</sup> Joe Brechner, "The Birmingham Tragedy," WFTV-TV editorial, 16 September 1963.

<sup>617</sup> Ibid.

There are other examples of warnings that racial strife taking place in other parts of the country could come to Orlando. On 25 July 1966, Brechner told Orlandoans they had been fortunate so far, but keeping their community peaceful would require effort:

Orlando has been a model community with its progressive efforts by the Mayor's Inter-Racial Advisory Committee, and the full support it has received from business, civic and religious organizations, and the citizens of our area. But the Committee and all citizens must now be alert to new and changing needs of minority groups and the underprivileged and unemployed or low income families living within slum areas--with their needs for better housing, job opportunities, recreational facilities and better health and education facilities. These are the fundamental conditions that exploded into trouble in other cities which has led to immeasurable losses of life and property, to business, to landlords, even to the poor themselves and innocent bystanders.<sup>618</sup>

### Praise

Within that editorial was also another example of praise for the community and its leaders. Brechner told the community's citizens and leaders how well they were doing: "We know citizens of Central Florida condemn troublemakers and extremists--colored and white--who would incite violence or disorder and destroy the tranquillity of our area and

---

<sup>618</sup> Joe Brechner, "How to Prevent Racial Unrest," WFTV-TV editorial, 25 July 1966.

progress made here in race relations and community development."<sup>619</sup>

Brechner used this strategy again when all-black Jones High School played mostly white Edgewater High School on the football field in 1967:

The football game last Thursday night in Orlando between Jones High School and Edgewater High School was an outstanding event in Central Florida. . . . What made this event outstanding was the goodwill it generated in friendly inter-racial relations in Central Florida. . . . The event reflected the maturity of all our citizens, both adults and young people. It showed that integration not only can work here, but it can work unusually well.<sup>620</sup>

Brechner complimented the athletic departments of both high schools, the City Commission, the Police Department, and the Mayor of Orlando, an apparent attempt to make everyone feel they had had a part in, and therefore a stake in, this integration success.

Brechner's strategy did not always work completely. The following year, the same two teams met at the Tangerine Bowl. A group of blacks known as the Ring Eye Gang sneaked into the game and started fist fights in the stands. There were some fights between students of the two schools. The

---

<sup>619</sup> Joe Brechner, "Violence and Civil Rights," WFTV-TV editorial, 26 July 1967.

<sup>620</sup> Joe Brechner, "Outstanding Football Game," WFTV-TV editorial, 18 September 1967.

Ring Eye Gang had no racial agenda. According to Father Nelson Pinder, a black Episcopalian minister, gang members were more interested in establishing their "turf."<sup>621</sup> Father Pinder remembered some friction both on and off the field even before the Ring Eye Gang started trouble. The referees were all white. Pinder said they were calling a biased game in favor of the white players. Pinder called it "tension football."<sup>622</sup>

However, the trouble did not go beyond the stadium that night. There were no subsequent problems connected with the incident. That was far different from the pattern seen in other American cities in the sixties, when incidents similar to the Tangerine Bowl fights led to escalated racial disturbances. A committee was appointed by Mayor Carl Langford to look into the causes of the stadium brawl. Heading that committee was Joe Brechner. Brechner's committee turned in its report nine days later. The committee found that members of both the black and white communities and students and faculty at both schools "were

---

<sup>621</sup> Interview with Father Nelson Pinder, 9 March 1998.

<sup>622</sup> Ibid.

greatly upset, embarrassed and disturbed by the outbreak."<sup>623</sup>

Students and faculty at both schools recommended that there be no cutback in interaction between white and black schools and even urged that there be an extension of activities between predominately black and predominately white schools. Those activities, according to the report, were to include not only football, but also "other common interests such as debating, musical events, arts competitions, and any other events which promote and encourage racial understandings between the races while stimulating greater interest, diversity and higher standards among both groups."<sup>624</sup>

The committee's report stressed that the incident at the Tangerine Bowl could have grown into the kind of tragedy that had hit other cities but concluded that the reason it did not was the progress that had been made in the preceding ten years of civil rights efforts in Orlando. The committee used its opportunity to speak to the community by stressing again that Orlandoans must continue to press for equal rights and

---

<sup>623</sup> "Stadium Brawl Blamed on Troublemakers Seeking to Exploit Racism, Orlando Sentinel, 29 September 1968, 10A.

<sup>624</sup> Ibid.

equal opportunities and that law enforcement should enforce laws equitably for both blacks and whites.

The committee also warned that another football game involving all-black Jones High School and another predominately white high school, scheduled for the following week should be rescheduled if adequate police protection could not be afforded. That advice was not heeded by city officials. The game went on--and there was another, similar, disturbance, which also ended quickly and was not followed by more widespread violence.<sup>625</sup>

What is remarkable about the incidents at the football games is not that they happened, but that they were over so quickly, and that Orlando returned to normalcy so soon. Much of the credit for a relatively benign racial atmosphere in the city must go to Joe Brechner because of his extensive efforts, both on and off the air, to advance the cause of civil rights in Orlando.

### Patriotism

If anyone wanted to see that benign racial atmosphere destroyed it was the people Brechner called "extremists." Extremists in general, the Ku Klux Klan in particular, drew much of Brechner's attention in his daily editorials. He

---

<sup>625</sup> Interview with Father Nelson Pinder, 9 March 1998.

repeatedly stressed that extremists, such as members of the Klan and the John Birch Society, who cloaked themselves in the American flag, were definitely not patriots as they frequently claimed to be. They were, instead, "hate mongers, dangerous anarchists, dynamitists, and human assassins."<sup>626</sup>

In addition to praising his viewers for what he perceived to be their reasoned, fair stand on civil rights, Brechner attempted often to make them feel part of the team, to establish an "us against them" mindset when speaking of extremists and bigots:

While communities like Orlando have formed Inter-racial Committees and have worked out differences over a conference table, other communities, including Ocala,<sup>627</sup> have failed miserably because they have not even attempted to meet the challenge of our times intelligently and reasonably. . . . As we view disturbances in other parts of the state and nation, one fact becomes obvious. Local, area and state officials must handle problems and differences on the local level. . . . Central Florida must control rabble rousing on either side of the racial issue. We have no room for rabble in Marion or any other community in Florida.<sup>628</sup>

---

<sup>626</sup> Joe Brechner, "How Dangerous are Crackpots," WFTV-TV editorial, 11 May 1962.

<sup>627</sup> The editorial noted that Ocala had formed a bi-racial committee that had been dissolved a week later.

<sup>628</sup> Joe Brechner, "Rabble in Marion," WFTV-TV editorial, 24 October 1963.

Brechner saw the Klan as a force that could, if left unchecked, "destroy Americans and America."<sup>629</sup> In numerous editorials on the KKK, Brechner called the Klan "rabble rousing group," "a terror gang," and "cowards hiding under hoods and robes preaching hatred and committing violence."<sup>630</sup> Brechner editorials also reminded viewers that they could not simply withdraw and hope the problem of the Ku Klux Klan would go away, that action was the way to solve racial problems.

In October, 1963, three months after Orlando had peacefully integrated fifty-six hotels, motels, and restaurants,<sup>631</sup> Brechner praised Representative Charles E. Weltner of Georgia for his stand on civil rights, while at the same time letting Weltner's words serve as a warning: "Weltner said that moderate white Southerners who remained quiet [about the KKK] must share the blame for the Birmingham, Alabama church bombings."<sup>632</sup> Swimming pool

---

<sup>629</sup> Joe Brechner, "A Klan Warning," WFTV-TV editorial, 15 July 1963.

<sup>630</sup> Ibid.

<sup>631</sup> Eve Bacon, *Orlando, A Centennial History* (Chulota, FL, 1977), 249.

<sup>632</sup> Joe Brechner, "Partial Civil Rights," WFTV-TV editorial, 11 October 1963.



integration had not gone as smoothly that same summer as full integration had been delayed until the following year, but there had been no violent confrontations, such as those that would hit St. Augustine the following summer.<sup>633</sup> Klansmen were a "social cancer" that rode "in the night to frighten, beat, bomb and murder without fear of apprehension and punishment."<sup>634</sup> Writing about a House Un-American Activities Committee vote to investigate the Klan, Brechner said, "We must rid ourselves of these shrouded examples of lawlessness

---

<sup>633</sup> David J. Garrow, ed., *St. Augustine, Florida, 1963-1964: Mass Protest and Racial Violence* (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, Inc.), 220-221. Both the summer of 1963 and 1964 were violent in St. Augustine. Martin Luther King had promised a "long hot summer" in 1964. Hundreds of demonstrators were arrested; both blacks and whites were beaten; Dr. King's rented house at the beach was vandalized and an attempt made to set it on fire; acid was poured into a motel swimming pool when blacks attempted to integrate the pool; some black demonstrators were nearly drowned when they tried to swim at a whites-only beach; a gang of white youths attacked six black youths who were fishing from a St. Augustine bridge. Those were only some of the incidents that took place during the "long, hot summer." In many of the events, particularly swimming pool and beach integration, there was a strong Klan presence. See also R.O. Mitchell (Chmn.) *Racial and Civil Disorders in St. Augustine, Report of the Legislative Investigation Committee*, Feb., 1965 and David R. Colburn, *Racial Change and Community Crisis: St. Augustine, Florida, 1877-1980* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

<sup>634</sup> Joe Brechner, "Klan Investigation," WFTV-TV editorial, 2 April 1965.

from a better-to-be-forgotten past."<sup>635</sup> Orlandoans, once again, were not supposed to close their doors and eyes and hope the problem would go away as long as they did not take part in Klan activities.

A month later, in another editorial targeting the Klan, Brechner wrote:

Such deranged minds . . . are a dangerous threat to any community. And the problem rests with the community. Legislation or denunciation will do no good unless the responsible citizens of local communities are aroused and openly resist and deplore the very existence of any organization that thrives on hatred and violence. The Klan will only be eliminated if Southern citizens and civic leaders themselves, and particularly state and local political officials and law enforcement officers, forcefully and wholeheartedly state their revulsion and refuse support of this society of bigots known as the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>636</sup>

Brechner made it clear to Orlandoans that they had a stake in what Klansmen were allowed, or not allowed, to do in their community and that Orlando residents held the key to their own future:

Communities throughout the nation, large or small, have witnessed the moral and political deterioration of communities where fear and violence have prevailed. On the other hand, they have seen the peaceful progress

---

<sup>635</sup> Ibid.

<sup>636</sup> Joe Brechner, "Society of Bigots," WFTV-TV editorial, 11 May 1965.

that is possible where understanding reasonableness and fair and sensible judgment prevail.<sup>637</sup>

The editorial attacks on the Klan did not go unnoticed by Klan members. Employees at Channel Nine arrived one morning to find a Klan sticker on the door. The sticker said, "A Klansman was here."<sup>638</sup> In addition, there were threats of bodily harm to members of the newsroom staff if criticism of the Klan continued.<sup>639</sup> Ray Ruester, who was news director at the station for most of the sixties, recalled in 1998 that employees were often afraid that they would be the target of a Klan attack.<sup>640</sup>

The fears of Channel Nine employees were not unfounded. There was Klan activity in Orlando and other cities in Florida. The Klan was blamed for much of the violence that hit St. Augustine in the sixties.<sup>641</sup> Brechner and other citizens of Orlando interested in keeping the peace must have

---

<sup>637</sup> Joe Brechner, "Justice and Changing Attitudes," WFTV-TV editorial, 8 December 1965.

<sup>638</sup> Joe Brechner, "'Klan Investigation,'" WFTV-TV editorial, 2 April 1965.

<sup>639</sup> Joe Brechner, "Clear and Present Danger," WFTV-TV editorial, 17 November 1967.

<sup>640</sup> Interview with Ray Ruester, 26 February 1998.

<sup>641</sup> David Colburn, *Racial Change and Community Crisis: St. Augustine, Florida, 1877-1980* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 50.

shuddered in October of 1967 to see 400 Klansmen motorcade through the city, then conclude "their meeting with a cross-burning in the patio area of Kemp's Coliseum."<sup>642</sup> Brechner might have also shuddered but did not back down from his anti-Klan, pro-civil rights stance when the results of a poll Channel Nine conducted that same month showed that 52 percent of WFTV-TV viewers approved of the Ku Klux Klan. Brechner's widow, Marion, recalled that even when Klan members called Brechner at home, he refused to have his home phone number removed from the directory, saying, "If they're out there, I want to know who they are and I want to know if they're coming."<sup>643</sup>

Brechner himself was a patriot. He believed in the guarantees of the constitution and that to deny those guarantees to anyone was to defile what America stood for.<sup>644</sup> When a viewer who disagreed with Brechner wrote, threatening to telephone all of Channel Nine's advertisers to say he would not patronize them because they advertised on the station, Brechner said:

---

<sup>642</sup> Joe Brechner, "Renewed Menace," WFTV-TV editorial, 17 October 1967.

<sup>643</sup> Interview with Marion Brechner, 9 March 1998.

<sup>644</sup> Interview with Marion Brechner, 22 April 1998.

Fortunately, most advertisers are sensible, patriotic Americans who believe in free, responsible expression. . . . An editorial is designed to stimulate thought, discussion of an issue , and to provoke public understanding and action, if necessary. We appreciate comments pro and con. That's the American way.<sup>645</sup>

With United States involvement in Vietnam escalating,<sup>646</sup> in October 1965, Brechner again used patriotism as a theme, telling his viewers that each of them should to speak up on issues of civil rights, and

assume personal responsibility to stand up openly, speak his mind and strongly assert his views and principles, based upon logic, good sense and a reasonable respect for the positions of others. We speak glibly about defending democracy and liberty. While our youth fight enemies of Democracy overseas, those of us at home had better put ourselves openly on the firing line to resist and overcome the enemies of liberty in our own backyard.<sup>647</sup>

### It's Good Business

Another major category of editorial used by Joe Brechner was the appeal to Orlando's business community. It was an appeal based on self-preservation. Business and the economy were important factors in 1960s Orlando. The city was growing. Groundbreakings and events marking the openings of

---

<sup>645</sup> Joe Brechner, "Letters to the Editorials," WLOF-TV editorial, 13 September 1961

<sup>646</sup> Robert L. Hilliard and Michael C. Kieth, *The Broadcast Century* (Boston: Focal Press, 1992), 182.

<sup>647</sup> Joe Brechner, "Freedom's Enemies at Home," WFTV-TV editorial, 14 October 1965.

new Orlando businesses were held regularly. New roads leading to Orlando were being built, including a 61-mile stretch of the Sunshine Parkway between Orlando and Yeehaw Junction.<sup>648</sup>

Brechner was a businessman himself. He understood the issues that were important to business, and he did not hesitate to use them to promote racial fairness. What business person could fail to see the profit message in an August 1963 editorial:

The experience referred to by the article [an article in the *Wall Street Journal* on the effects of desegregation in southern cities] points up a significant and perhaps surprising fact, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. Among those restaurants and hotels, theaters and other places of public accommodation in the South that have begun serving or hiring Negroes, only a few report suffering any lasting economic consequences. A sizable number, in fact, declare that business has been better than ever.<sup>649</sup>

In September 1961, shortly after several Orlando variety and drugstores began serving blacks at lunch counters during prearranged hours without incident,<sup>650</sup> Brechner pointed out what had happened to other communities that had encountered racial problems:

---

<sup>648</sup> Bacon, Orlando.

<sup>649</sup> Joe Brechner, "Does Desegregation Hurt Business," WFTV-TV editorial, 9 August 1963.

<sup>650</sup> Bacon, Orlando.

Little Rock, which became a symbol of educational chaos, paid heavily for its negligence. According to a study, one-third fewer families are moving into Little Rock now than in 1957 when trouble started. And twice as many families moved out in 1958 and 1959. As the average American family increased its buying power by two per cent, the average Little Rock family had a seven per cent decrease in buying power. . . . And here's a report that would send chills up and down the spine of any industrial development board. Little Rock was adding small and large industrial plants every year from 1950 through 1957, the year schools were closed. In 1958 and 1959--None! No new plants added at all.<sup>651</sup>

In the same editorial, "rabble-rousers" were blamed for causing business problems in Little Rock by impeding the progress of integration. Responsible community leaders were praised for trying to change the direction of the city's integration efforts. It would take two more years of gradual effort, but when school integration was fully implemented in Orlando, there were no incidents.<sup>652</sup>

#### A Voice For Minorities

Patriotism, as well as the other themes of Joe Brechner's strategy, were part of another apparently important factor in editorial policy. Brechner frequently broadcast the views of his audience. On many evenings, the editorial was a compilation of letters to the editor,

---

<sup>651</sup> Joe Brechner, "The Failure of the Rabble Rousers," WLOF-TV editorial, 7 September 1961.

<sup>652</sup> Bacon, *Orlando*, 250.

sometimes called "Letters to Editorials," sometimes called "Snipes and Gripes," sometimes given a subject-related title. In one editorial, titled "Equal Justice and Protection," a letter from a black Orlandoan was read to viewers. The writer said:

The Negro society cannot help but be stunned and amazed that no cry of treason or sedition went out against the perpetrators in the bombing and killing of four little girls in a Birmingham church. . . . As a Negro, I don't believe that rioting is the answer, but I know that every Negro recognizes and deplores the conditions as they exist today. The white community must first of all recognize that the picture of patience and unending endurance in which they have characterized the Negro . . . is only a figment of their own imagination<sup>653</sup>

The letter went on to say that "[F]rom an economic point racial prejudices are no longer tenable, are morally wrong and are completely unacceptable to the Negro," and that a good place to start healing would be "the personal dedication and conviction of every citizen that from this day forth he will treat his fellow Americans as he himself would like to be treated."<sup>654</sup>

Joe Brechner's editorial for that evening had been written, just as Brechner would have written it, but by a

---

<sup>653</sup> Joe Brechner, "Equal Justice and Protection," WFTV-TV editorial, 25 April 1968.

<sup>654</sup> Ibid.



black viewer. Not all letter writers identified themselves by race, but it would be logical to assume that other letters written by blacks were part of these "letters to the editor" segments. Brechner recognized that one of the frustrations of blacks was their lack of voice in matters that so directly concerned them. In July, 1967 he editorialized:

A main source of frustration within minority groups is their exclusion from serving in some capacity and having a voice, even a minority voice, in the affairs of the state and their local communities. . . . Some cities, such as Orlando, have advisory boards and groups that are inter-racial by choice--or by chance. In the past, Negroes have not been represented on many boards and committees that decide primarily matters affecting Negroes or Negro areas. . . . Only if disadvantaged groups are represented in the planning and other affairs in the community can we expect continued progress and improvement in social and economic conditions and the maintenance of an atmosphere of goodwill and understanding within our area.<sup>655</sup>

### Despair

Even though the editorials reflect an apparent picture of a single-minded, ever-optimistic champion of civil rights, Brechner occasionally showed signs of despair. Shortly after the 4 April 1968 assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Brechner wrote,

How long can we endure the enemies of truth, justice and democracy? How much longer must we tolerate indifference? How long must we hope for a change of

---

<sup>655</sup> Joe Brechner, "Who Represents the Minority." WFTV-TV editorial, 28 July 1967.

spirit? When will all Americans accept and support the promise of full freedom offered by our founding fathers who pledged to each other their lives, their fortune and sacred honor in signing this declaration?

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."

As we wait for the consummation of these great truths, this American dream, too often we seem very alone with our impatience and sense of outrage.<sup>656</sup>

### Beyond Editorials

Brechner's editorials were important in establishing a more racially positive climate in Orlando but were not the only contribution he made to his community. Just as Brechner had hired blacks at his Orlando radio station, he also hired blacks at his television station, training the first blacks in Florida television to be technicians and news personnel and putting blacks on the air.<sup>657</sup>

Another factor in the racial climate of Orlando in the sixties was the Inter-Racial Committee established by Mayor Bob Carr. Joe Brechner was one of the initial five members of the committee, which was eventually expanded to twenty-

---

<sup>656</sup> Joe Brechner, "A Sense of Outrage," WFTV-TV editorial, 8 April 1968.

<sup>657</sup> Bob Bilingslea, address at a Chamber of Commerce Luncheon honoring Brechner, Radisson Hotel, Lake Ivanhoe, 8 March 1988.

four members, twelve black and twelve white.<sup>658</sup> The group's name changed over the years, first to the Community Relations Committee, then to the Human Relations Committee. The group was frequently mentioned in editorials on Channel Nine. The editorials lauded the work of the Committee<sup>659</sup> and gave members much of the credit for keeping the peace in Orlando.<sup>660</sup> Other communities, such as Ocala, were criticized for not forming bi-racial committees or for forming committees and then letting them go out of existence.<sup>661</sup> Brechner was instrumental on the Commission as it grew in persuading other members that they must support the Civil Rights Movement in Orlando.

Bob Bilingslea later became a member of the Commission, then its president. In later years he went to work as director of equal opportunity programs at Walt Disney World. During a Chamber of Commerce tribute to Brechner in 1988, he outlined how Brechner had worked behind the scenes, as well

---

<sup>658</sup> "Major Merchants Will Integrate Sales Force," Orlando Sentinel, 11 June 1963, A1.

<sup>659</sup> Joe Brechner, "Progress in Race Relations," WFTV-TV editorial, 30 July 1963.

<sup>660</sup> Joe Brechner, "Race Relations Improve," WFTV-TV editorial, 6 June 1963.

<sup>661</sup> Joe Brechner, "Rabble in Marion," WFTV-TV editorial, 24 October 1963.

as on the air, to bring about peaceful integration in Orlando.

It was newcomer Joe Brechner who brought the problem to a head when he met privately with the Mayor. [Brechner said,] "Not only is the situation in the Black community unfair and dishonest, it is going to explode in our faces unless we do something about it, and soon." Brechner's plan was neat and simple. Move the interracial problems out in the open. Point out to the business and professional leaders the tremendous value of the Black population as employees, customers and consumers. Start talking and listening.<sup>662</sup>

Mayor Robert Carr agreed with Brechner and took the message to business and community leaders. Billingslea told those gathered to honor Brechner:

Things improved. Not overnight, but slowly and surely. Joe Brechner asked business leaders to increase black employment and to increase on the job training for black employees, an unheard of request in those days, but it happened.<sup>663</sup>

Billingslea reminded Orlandoans of the bitter race riots that had hit other southern cities, such as Atlanta, Tampa, Jacksonville, Little Rock, Nashville, and Selma. "It is important," he said, "to know that Orlando did not resort to those kind of tactics. Brechner's committee had done its job. Brechner underlined these events with editorials on WFTV and copies sent to local civic and business leaders."

---

<sup>662</sup> Bob Billingslea, Brechner Luncheon.

<sup>663</sup> Ibid.

There were no ugly incidents at Orlando lunch counters, such as the beating of Memphis Norman by Benny Oliver in Jackson, no riots, no white protests against integration of the counters. "The people of Orlando," said Bilingslea, "both black and white, had quietly taken a stand. They approved of the work of the Human Relations Committee and wanted it to continue."<sup>664</sup>

One of the major criticisms of the media in the 1968 Kerner Commission report was media failure to include blacks in the mirror held up to Americans. Blacks were not visible in many communities; they were ignored by the white media. ommission members wrote in their report, "The average black person couldn't give less of a damn about what the media says. The intelligent black person is resentful at what he considers to be a totally false portrayal of what goes on in the ghetto. Most black people see the newspapers as mouthpieces of the power structure."<sup>665</sup> Orlando television viewers, black and white, got a different picture from the editorials and the news coverage of Channel Nine.

---

<sup>664</sup> Ibid.

<sup>665</sup> Report of The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Otto Kerner, Chairman (New York: New York Times Co., 1968), 374.

Another of the complaints against the news media in the Kerner Commission report is that media were not covering all the events surrounding the Civil Rights Movement, a dangerous policy:

[W]e believe it would be imprudent to and even dangerous to downplay coverage in the hope that censored reporting of inflammatory incidents somehow will diminish violence. Once a disturbance occurs, the word will spread independently of newspapers and television. To attempt to ignore these events or portray them as something other than what they are, can only diminish confidence in the media and increase the effectiveness of those who monger rumors and the fears of those who listen.<sup>666</sup>

According to the Kerner Commission report, that had been a major part of the problem in Detroit's riots. Some broadcasters had cooperated with police by not reporting the riot in hopes that they could "avoid attracting people to the scene."<sup>667</sup> With no solid information about the obvious trouble and no explanation for the large numbers of police on the streets, rumors could spread unchecked.

In his February 1998 interview, former news director Ray Ruester said he and Brechner were committed to broadcasting all the news. He recalled that the publisher of the *Orlando Sentinel*, Martin Anderson, chose not to publish stories on

---

<sup>666</sup> Ibid., 365.

<sup>667</sup> Ibid., 87.

many of the events in the community for fear of "stirring up trouble."<sup>668</sup> Kathy Amick Fuqua-Cardwell, whose 1992 master's thesis for Rollins College in Winter Park, outlined the Civil Rights Movement in Central Florida,<sup>669</sup> also remembers that Anderson chose to sit on stories rather than risk exacerbating Orlando's racial tensions by alerting the community to problems that already existed.<sup>670</sup>

Examination of Joe Brechner's editorials is significant for two reasons: The material left behind by Brechner is a valuable historical record of the part played by Channel Nine and its owner in the community served by the station. It is unusual to find such a rich file of scripts from a local station from as far back as the sixties. Broadcasters seldom think of their craft as history. They think of it as an evanescent transmission of information that is useless once the words have been uttered and the pictures shown. There are a few stations that do have tape and film libraries from decades past, but there are many that do not. Some stations

---

<sup>668</sup> Interview with Ray Ruester, who was Channel Nine News Director during the sixties, 26 February 1998.

<sup>669</sup> Fuqua-Cardwell, "Racial Justice."

<sup>670</sup> Interview with Kathy Amick Fuqua-Cardwell, 20 February 1998.

save their video but do not consider scripts as important as pictures.

It is also unusual to find a broadcaster with Brechner's dedication to hard-hitting editorials. Examination of what happened in Orlando during the years Brechner was writing frequent editorials on civil rights indicates that perhaps such dedication can change the course of a community's history. Brechner was awarded first place in the nation in the Community Service division by the National Conference of Mayors in 1964. In giving Brechner the award, Honolulu Mayor Neal S. Blaisdell cited the broadcaster's editorials on community relations.<sup>671</sup> Brechner commented that second place went to "a little station known as WCBS-TV of New York City."<sup>672</sup> WFTV also won the DuPont Foundation award for service in the public interest in 1964. The award lauded WFTV for exposing its viewers to a generous range of viewpoints and attitudes. The foundation commended WFTV "for appealing . . . for intelligence, moderation, and good will in the solution of social problems that have only too

---

<sup>671</sup> *The Corner Cupboard*, 28 May 1964.

<sup>672</sup> In 1960, Orlando's population was only 87,000. Orange County's population was 262,000. Eve Bacon, *Orlando: A Centennial History*, vol. 2 (Chuluota, Florida: The Mickler House, 1977), 230.



often, in other communities been met with mindless violence."<sup>673</sup>

There were other stations in the sixties presenting editorials with real meaning for the community. WTVJ-TV in Miami and WJXT-TV in Jacksonville were among them.<sup>674</sup> There are few stations with regular editorials on the air in the nineties, fewer who present editorials with any real substance. Too often, television editorials follow the pattern mentioned in the conclusion of this dissertation, as well as in Chapter 7, on the state of the broadcast editorial in the 1960s. It is a pattern of safe, public service editorials that do not risk stepping on toes or alienating advertisers.

Joe Brechner eschewed such fluff in favor of issues that were more urgently important to the societal health of Orlando. He used several themes to convince his viewers that equality and fairness were the goals Orlando should strive

---

<sup>673</sup> "DuPont Foundation Award," WFTV editorial, 22 March 1965.

<sup>674</sup> For information on WTVJ, see Fran Matera, "WTVJ, Miami: Wolfson, Renick, and "May the Good News be Yours," in *Television in America*, Michael D. Murray and Donald G. Godfrey, eds. (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1997.) For information on WJXT, see Joe Glover, "Media Influence on City-County Consolidation in Jacksonville and Duval County, Florida, 1967." Unpublished manuscript, University of Florida, 1997. Also see chapters in this dissertation on Ralph Renick and Norm Davis.

for. Brechner stressed fairness as black and white Orlandoans dealt with each other. He warned that a hostile racial atmosphere in Orlando could lead to the problems being encountered by other American cities in the 1960s, bringing both violence and economic decline to his city. He equated fairness and equality with patriotism. He branded members of extremist groups unpatriotic and out of place in Orlando, or anywhere else in America. He attempted to hold up a mirror for the citizens and leaders of Orlando, in which they would see a picture of what he hoped they would become. In so doing, Brechner helped shape the Orlando of the sixties and beyond, and contributed to the successful effort to keep Orlando from experiencing the violent racial strife that hit other southern cities such as St. Augustine,<sup>675</sup> Tampa,<sup>676</sup> Jacksonville,<sup>677</sup> Miami,<sup>678</sup> Selma,<sup>679</sup> Birmingham,<sup>680</sup> and Montgomery<sup>681</sup> in the 1960s.

---

<sup>675</sup> David J. Garrow, ed., *St. Augustine, Florida, 1963-1964: Mass Protest and Racial Violence* (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, Inc.), 220-221.

<sup>676</sup> Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, Otto Kerner (Chmn.) (New York: New York Times Co., 1968), 411.

<sup>677</sup> Robert Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound: A History of America's Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 26.

---

<sup>678</sup> David R. Colburn and Jane L. Landers, eds., *The African American Heritage of Florida* (Gainesville: The University Press of Florida, 1995), 354.

<sup>679</sup> Robert Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound: A History of America's Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 138-143.

<sup>680</sup> *Ibid.*, 71-72.

<sup>681</sup> Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound*, 39.

## CHAPTER 11

### CONCLUSION AND ANALYSIS

This final chapter consists of four main sections. The first section is a summary of the evidence presented in this work. In the second section, based on evidence, conclusions are drawn concerning the relationship of the 1990s concept of community journalism to the work of Brechner, Davis, and Renick. Responses are provided for the major research questions that drove the study. In the third section, the conclusions are discussed in terms of what they mean, what they explain, and what they portend. In the final section, possibilities for continuing research are suggested

#### Summary

Community journalism, for this work, is defined as journalism based on communitarianism. Communitarianism is defined as the thesis that the community, rather than the individual, the state, the nation, or any other entity, is and should be at the center of our value system.

Existential communitarianism is defined as concerned primarily with community, but drawing from the principles of existentialism to include concern for individuals within the

community as well as concern for personal responsibility.<sup>682</sup>

The Webster definition of existentialism has been used.

Existentialism is defined as centered upon the analysis of existence, specifically of individual human beings, that regards human existence as not exhaustively describable or understandable in idealistic or scientific terms, and that stresses the freedom and responsibility of the individual, the irreducible uniqueness of an ethical or religious situation, and usu. the isolation and subjective experiences (as of anxiety, guilt, dread, anguish) of an individual therein."<sup>683</sup>

It was important to establish the definition of community journalism for this work because community journalists have themselves failed to define what they do. It has been mentioned earlier that this reluctance to define has forced those who study community journalism, as well as those who would criticize it, to use their own observation and experience to establish a definition. Definitions of communitariansim and existentialism were necessary for this

---

<sup>682</sup> See 13-14.

<sup>683</sup> Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Massachusetts: G & C. Merriam Company, 1976), 291.

work to insure that the reader would be functioning within the frame of reference of this study.

Understanding the concepts of communitarianism and existentialism were important to this work because it is those concepts that formed the foundation of the work of Joe Brechner, Norm Davis, and Ralph Renick. It was those concepts that were considered important in this research to determine if either the group of three editorialists or the group of 1990s community journalists were operating with the interests of the community at the center of their actions.

In an effort to determine which of the journalists and editorialists studied for this work were indeed community journalists, the research has examined several community journalism projects, supported as described earlier by the Pew Center for Civic Journalism. Projects in Charlotte, Madison, Tallahassee, Boston, and Seattle all showed evidence of concern with bottom-line considerations as at least partial motivation. They were being used to, as Freedom Forum ombudsman Paul McMasters said, "get some good vibes out there so that maybe people will start buying the paper again."<sup>684</sup>

---

<sup>684</sup> Merritt and McMasters, "Debate," 181.

The projects in New Orleans and Columbus, Georgia, were somewhat different and reminiscent of the work of three 1960s era television editorialists: Joe Brechner, Norm Davis, and Ralph Renick. The New Orleans and Columbus projects were conceived out of concern for the community. In both instances, the journalists involved were risking something with little chance they would reap anything more than improving public life, just as Brechner, Davis, and Renick had done.

### Brechner

In practicing his version of community journalism, Joe Brechner was answering one of the major criticisms of the media in the 1968 Kerner Commission long before the report was even issued. As explained in Chapter 3, the Commission said media had failed to include blacks in the mirror held up to Americans. Blacks were not visible in many communities; the white media ignored them. Commission members wrote in their report that blacks held the media in disdain because they could not see themselves accurately portrayed in those media. Blacks, said the Commission, saw newspapers as no more than mouthpieces for the white power

structure.<sup>685</sup> Orlando television viewers, black and white, got a different picture from the editorials and the news coverage of Channel Nine.

Another Kerner Commission complaint, cited in Chapter 10, against the news media in the Kerner Commission report was that media were not covering all the events surrounding the Civil Rights Movement. That had caused a problem in Detroit, for instance, when citizens knew there was rioting occurring, but saw no mention of it on television or in newspapers.

In a February 1998 interview, former WFTV-TV news director Ray Rueter said he and Brechner were committed to broadcasting all the news. The local newspaper, on the other hand, according to Rueter, did not publish some stories because of the fear of stirring up trouble. Kathy Amick Fuqua-Cardwell expressed a similar view in her 1992 master's thesis for Rollins College. Had there been no Channel Nine during the sixties, and no Joe Brechner at the helm, it is possible rumors could have spread during Orlando's hot summer nights. It is possible Orlando could have experienced more tension, fed by lack of information.

---

<sup>685</sup> Report of The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Otto Kerner, Chairman. (New York: New York Times Co., 1968), 374.



Brechner was awarded first place in the nation in the Community Service division by the National Conference of Mayors in 1964. In giving Brechner the award, Honolulu Mayor Neal S. Blaisdell cited the broadcaster's editorials on community relations.<sup>686</sup> WFTV also won the DuPont Foundation award for service in the public interest in 1964. The award lauded WFTV for exposing its viewers to a generous range of viewpoints and attitudes. The foundation commended WFTV "for appealing . . . for intelligence, moderation and good will in the solution of social problems that have only too often, in other communities been met with mindless violence."<sup>687</sup>

Brechner used several themes to convince his viewers that equality and fairness were the goals Orlando should strive for. He stressed fairness as black and white Orlandoans dealt with each other. He warned that a hostile racial atmosphere in Orlando could lead to the problems being encountered by other American cities in the 1960s, bringing both violence and economic decline to his city. He equated fairness and equality with patriotism. He branded members of extremist groups unpatriotic and out of place in Orlando, or

---

<sup>686</sup> *The Corner Cupboard*, 28 May 1964.

<sup>687</sup> "DuPont Foundation Award," WFTV editorial, 22 March 1965.

anywhere else in America. He attempted to hold up a mirror for the citizens and leaders of Orlando, in which they would see a picture of what he hoped they would become. In so doing, Brechner helped shape the Orlando of the sixties and beyond and contributed to the successful effort to keep Orlando from experiencing the violent racial strife that hit other southern cities in the 1960s.

#### Davis

Newspaper, magazine, and journal reports from the 1960s give WJXT the lion's share of credit for spurring the community and community leaders to action in voting out a corrupt, inefficient form of government. There is no record of other media in Jacksonville presenting investigative reports until after WJXT had taken a long lead.

Although Richard Martin, who wrote for the *Florida Times-Union*, claimed credit for being the driving media force behind consolidation in Jacksonville and Duval County, the evidence shows that Norm Davis and his co-workers at WJXT-TV were at least as strong and probably a stronger factor than Richard Martin and the *Times Union* in governmental change. It was a grand jury called because of the urging of Davis and as a result of the WJXT investigative reports, that delivered indictments against two of the five Jacksonville city

commissioners, indictments against four of nine city councilmen, and indictments of the city auditor and the city recreation chief. Those same editorials and investigative reports resulted in the grand jury censure and subsequent resignation of the Jacksonville tax assessor. Grand jury members made it clear in their final report what they thought should happen next: "We recommend a complete revision of the governmental structure of the City of Jacksonville."<sup>688</sup>

There can be little doubt that Martin and the *Times-Union* were important contributing factors to the "yes" vote for consolidation. There can be little doubt that the newspaper was an important force in the community. However, some of the evidence points to WJXT as a much more important factor than Martin considered it to be. It is probable that without WJXT, Jacksonville would have continued to struggle under the old, inefficient, redundant, and corrupt form of government and that consolidation would have remained a dream for community leaders who thought the city and county deserved better.

#### Renick

Like the other editorialist subjects of this project, Ralph Renick displayed a consistent communitarian spirit,

---

<sup>688</sup> Cited in Martin's *Consolidation*, 88.

delivering editorials that urged others in his society to do the right thing. Renick was responsible for more editorials than either Brechner or Davis, in part because he was first, in part because he stayed longest.

The Miami broadcaster's editorials were sometimes in the form of crusades, sometimes on the same subject for many consecutive nights. The apparent effectiveness of his crusades is easier to gauge when he was editorializing on striptease establishments or unsanitary restaurants. Results of campaigns on crime, governmental corruption, and civil rights are not as easily measured.

Like the others, Renick risked something when he voiced strong opinions. There was risk in terms of personal safety and of financial well-being. Perhaps he took the greatest risk in editorializing on civil rights when he "decided not to duck," risking the ire of advertisers and viewers in the South of the mid-1900s. He used his nightly editorials to make an attempt to better his community.

### Conclusions

The purpose of this study has been to compare and contrast the community journalism of the 1990s with the community journalism practiced by Joe Brechner, Norm Davis, and Ralph Renick. Three major questions drove this research.

The first asked, What is community journalism? The second was, Were the three editorialists who are the focus of this research community journalists and, if so, what made them community journalists? And the third was, Should journalists of the year 2000 and beyond consider Brechner, Davis, and Renick journalists to be emulated? This is a study significant to modern-day journalists who search for ways to restore their credibility and public trust. This research suggests it is possible there is value for modern journalists in studying the work of Brechner, Renick, and Davis.

#### What is Community Journalism?

To define community journalism, it is necessary also to explore what it is not. This research has shown that community journalism as practiced in the 1990s lacked the genuine purpose of improving the communities of those who were calling themselves community journalists. It has also shown that 1990s community journalism lacked the element of existentialism.

A community journalist as defined in Chapter 1 of this work is someone who is willing to put the interests of community above one's own interests. Joe Brechner, Norm Davis and Ralph Renick all fit that definition, as well as the definition of existential journalists because they were

willing to use their talents and their medium to enhance the lives of those around them. This definition is not what most community journalists espouse. Normally, community journalism is an attempt to make the journalist part of the community and, therefore, a beneficiary of the public journalism project. That is not what Ralph Renick, Joe Brechner, and Norm Davis intended. They intended one thing-- that their editorials would contribute to the social health of their communities. It was communitarianism with an important additional factor. In each case, there was an element of existentialism.<sup>689</sup> Each of these editorialists was intent on making the most of his talents to enrich the lives of his community and the individuals in those communities.

Brechner, Davis and Renick: Real Community Journalists?

The definition of community journalism as it applies to this research has been restated in this chapter. Brechner,

---

<sup>689</sup> Defined in Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary as "A chiefly 20<sup>th</sup> Century philosophy that is centered upon the analysis of existence specif. of individual human beings, that regards human existence as not exhaustively describable or understandable in idealistic or scientific terms, and that stresses the freedom and responsibility of the individual, the irreducible uniqueness of an ethical or religious situation, and usu. the isolation and subjective experiences (as of anxiety, guilt, dread, anguish) of an individual therein." (Springfield, MA: G & C. Merriam Company, 1976), 291.

Davis, and Renick all placed their communities above their own self-interest and safety. They acted as existential communitarians, which is to say they took responsibility for improving their communities. The three editorialists also practiced virtuous behavior by Aristotle's standard.

Community journalism, as practiced by television stations WJXT, WTVJ, and WFTV, although no one at the stations is known to have called it that, involved what William Winn of the *Columbus Ledger* called "getting into the boat with the people."

Brechner et al. displayed their concern for community above all else by regularly putting ratings and personal safety at risk as they encouraged fair, responsible behavior by other members of their communities. Samples of the editorials of the three, interspersed throughout this work and included in the appendices, display an apparent lack of fear of negative reaction from those who were certain to disagree with them.

The three were clearly not taking the path many of their contemporaries were accused of following. It was far more common for broadcast editorialists during the time period covered in this oeuvre to take the path of least resistance, to editorialize on safe topics: "[E]ditorials championing

motherhood and demanding fearlessly that Main Street's name be changed to Affluent Way were more the rule than the exception."<sup>690</sup> In all respects, Messrs. Brechner, Davis, and Renick fit the definitions of community journalist as established in this research.

#### Worthy of Imitation?

In answering the third question posed by this research, "Should journalists of the year 2000 and beyond consider Brechner, Davis, and Renick journalists to be emulated?" it is necessary only to return to the principles that have repeatedly been mentioned herein: A deed is not virtuous unless it is done with virtuous intent, and Existential communitarianism is the standard to be followed.

If community journalism in the 1990s had been practiced as many of its proponents preached, it might have fallen into the category of a virtuous deed, practiced by existential communitarians.

#### Community Journalists of the 1990s

Many who practiced community journalism in the 1990s did so with an eye on how it would look to readers and viewers, not how it could positively affect the lives of those readers

---

<sup>690</sup> William A. Wood, *Electronic Journalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 65.



and viewers. There was seemingly much to be gained by becoming partners in the community. Journalists must ask, however, if that makes this form of community journalism the path to take as print and broadcast outlets attempt to head off erosion of their readership and viewership. They must ask themselves if they hamstring themselves in the effort to offer fair assessments of the group's activities when they become part of the group about which they report, rather than stepping outside the group and taking risks. They must ask if they are any more than group propagandists when they become part of the group on which they report. Even if they somehow manage to sustain a capacity for fairness in their involvement, they must ask if they will appear to have lost objectivity, thereby losing the support of even the minority to whom they are pledged to give a fair hearing. Examination of the evidence presented in this research makes it clear that the answer to all of these questions is "No" and that the path chosen by Brechner, Davis, and Renick is a more likely path to reestablishing trust between press and public. An important point to be reiterated in this regard is the importance of motivation.

Journalists of the 1990s should have also found it strange that newspapers, radio stations, and television

stations were all in partnership in the majority of these projects. When supposedly independent news organizations are involved in partnerships, even more of the diversity of the information provided to a community has been lost, and the Hutchins Commission complaint about too much control of the press in the hands of too few resonates.

What of Davis Merritt's claim in the 1990s that a journalist should not put so much stock in objectivity, that only a journalist involved in the community can hope to cover that community fairly and to take back the allegiance of the news consumer? McMasters answered that with a comparison of a physician and a journalist. It is not that a physician does not care about her patient when she/he makes objective decisions about treatment. It is because the physician does care that she/he is making objective decisions based on what she/he feels will pull the patient through.

#### Discussion

Joe Brechner, Norm Davis, and Ralph Renick were all practicing community journalism quite differently than were the self-proclaimed community journalists of the 1990s. This research has shown that they were, in fact, community journalists with emphasis on the communitarian aspect of community journalism. Examination of the motives of the two

groups shows a clear-cut difference in the intent behind their actions. Community journalists of the 1990s were more interested in bringing viewers and readers back to television sets and news stands than in contributing to the welfare of their communities. It was the opposite with Brechner, Davis, and Renick. In fact, the three editorialists risked driving viewers away. It is not apparent why journalists of the 1990s had developed an approach so different from the approach of Brechner, Davis, and Renick.

What is apparent is if the press is to repair its image, pandering to the public is not the way. The press must engage in the "vigorous mutual criticism" advised by the Hutchins Commission. What such "vigorous mutual criticism" is likely to determine is that the press has evolved into a profession that practices relativism to the extreme, which results, as Himmelfarb noted, in having no morality at all.<sup>691</sup> What else was community journalism but social relativism for the nineties? It was the "siren song," mentioned earlier.

---

<sup>691</sup> G. Himmelfarb, *The Demoralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1995), 239-241.

It was the road that promised salvation for journalism but was likely to deliver something quite different.<sup>692</sup>

Even a community journalist with good intentions can go astray. Merritt claimed what was needed was a symbiosis between politics and journalism. Merritt did not intend to say that this symbiosis between politics and journalism is to be a "you scratch mine, I'll scratch yours" kind of relationship, and he was careful to stress that he had the good of democracy in mind when suggesting a journalism/politics symbiosis.<sup>693</sup> Even the appearance of "you scratch mine, I'll scratch yours" between journalists and politicians

---

<sup>692</sup> Another of the Hutchins Commission's recommendations was a system for offering young journalists a better educational foundation and, by implication, a better foundation in ethics. Many journalism ethics educators agree that a foundation in ethics in journalism school frees a journalist from the impossible burden of having to agonize over every ethical decision in the field because the agonizing has been done in training. That is, after all, the point of journalism ethics education; to apply the philosophical models to practical problems in a classroom situation so the young journalist will not be operating without a road map when he/she is in the field. What is even worse for journalism is the practitioner who sees no need for agonizing because he has not been trained even to recognize a moral dilemma. The topic of ethics education is a subject for another paper. It is mentioned here only to suggest that there is an alternative to the ill-advised communitarian journalism effort.

<sup>693</sup> Merritt, *Public Journalism and Public Life*, 52. Merritt further explained this point in a personal conversation in Columbia, SC, 12 October 1998.

is dangerous. It is not only a matter of semantics to suggest that the real symbiosis in America has been between citizens and the press. There was no symbiosis between the political establishment and Brechner, Davis, or Renick. All three worked with government leaders who also had the good of community at heart, but all three were unabashed critics of those whose actions harmed their communities. The symbiosis of the three editorialists was with the citizens of their communities. If journalism loses sight of that relationship between press and public and allows itself to be drawn into a symbiotic relationship with politicians who are not also communitarians, community journalism will become not only disingenuous but also dangerous to democracy.

Certainly there were exceptions in the 1990s, as in the case of the *Times Picayune* and the *Columbus Ledger*. However, even the staunchest supporters of community journalism were saying things such as "You can't buy coverage like that on the front page of the *Seattle Times*," or "[B]y getting people in on the ground floor, getting them more excited about this kind of process, we think they become better, or more regular, newspaper readers." Statements such as those betray self-serving motivations rather than intent to improve public

life. They show community journalists firmly planted on an anti-Aristotelian/Sally Fields/bottom-line driven foundation.

Brechner, Davis, and Renick fall into the category of community journalists lauded by Davis Merritt, William Winn, and other more modern members of the press. Because that is the case, a logical assumption would be that 1990s community journalists were following the Brechner, Davis, Renick model. That was not the case. Community journalism, as practiced in the 1990s, resembled more a model of public relations than of existential communitarianism.

Critics of public journalism, such as Paul McMasters, the past president of the Society of Professional Journalists and First Amendment Ombudsman for the Freedom Forum; Ralph Barney, a professor at Brigham Young University; and others, have been quoted in this work. The one criticism heard most frequently from community journalism critics of the 1990s is that a major thrust, perhaps the major thrust of community journalism, appears to be self-serving, i.e., "the recapture of credibility by journalism."<sup>694</sup>

Had they examined the editorial crusades of the three television broadcasters studied for the present research, McMasters and the others who have criticized community

---

<sup>694</sup> Barney, "Community Journalism," 140-151.

journalism would have found none of the reluctance to rain on society's parade, none of the self-serving attempts to build readership and viewership found in latter day community journalists.

### Leading the Way

What makes the contributions of Brechner, Davis, and Renick more impressive is the context of their times. All displayed courage beyond that demanded of an independent editorialist of the 1990s. A fact most important for Brechner and Renick--Florida, although a state considered part of the new South, was still in many ways part of the old South. White racist attitudes were a fact of life for blacks attempting to survive 20<sup>th</sup> century Florida. Some Florida cities avoided racial strife for a time because city government and business leaders recognized the importance of presenting a peaceful facade. However, with a violent, repressive racial background that included much Ku Klux Klan activity, cosmetic attempts at integration would not likely have been enough to allow some areas of the state to escape much of the racial turmoil that was typical of 1960s America. Other influences were needed, among them independent editorial voices.

Becoming a strong editorial voice, even a crusading editorialist, took great courage in the late 1950s through the decade of the 1960s and into the early 1970s. Mary Ann Cusack<sup>695</sup> wrote that broadcasters had shown little of the fortitude it took to handle controversial subjects. Examination of the regulatory climate for broadcasters in this time period reveals that there were mixed signals for editorialists from the Federal Communications Commission, there was lack of trust from print journalists and other broadcasters, there was a public impression that broadcasters lacked intellectual depth, and there was the danger of offending advertisers by broadcasting controversial opinions. The combination of these factors made broadcast editorializing a practice to be avoided by the faint-hearted.

Brechner, Davis, and Renick were firm believers in the editorial as a force for positive change in their communities. Davis stated in a 1999 interview that it was during his crusade against corruption in Jacksonville area government that he realized how much one person could do to change his community for the better. Yet, none of the three gave in to the Sally Fields syndrome mentioned by McMasters. They were willing to incur the wrath of government leaders as

---

<sup>695</sup> See Chapter 6.



well as viewers and advertisers in their attempt to contribute to their communities.

#### Friends in the Front Office

In one sense Brechner et al. had an advantage over other broadcasters of their own time as well as over many of the community journalists of the 1990s. They had the support of management.

Joe Brechner was management, owner, and general manager of WFTV-TV. There was no one looking over his shoulder but the community when he wrote his editorials. There was no news director editing his copy. He wrote editorials for the news director and anchor to read.

Norm Davis had the unswerving support of News Director Bill Grove and General Manager Glenn Marshall. Davis said in his 1999 interview that Marshall allowed editorials criticizing some of Marshall's associates to air without alteration. WJXT's parent company, Post-Newsweek, was also a strong supporter of the WJXT editorial campaigns.

Ralph Renick was given free rein over newsroom affairs at WTVJ-TV by Mitchell Wolfson. Wolfson was the Wometco partner in charge of WTVJ. Wolfson also held strong beliefs

on the editorial responsibilities of a television station and was quoted in this work.<sup>696</sup>

Managerial support was another of the converging factors that allowed Brechner, Davis, and Renick to editorialize at their most effective levels. Had any of the three editorialists been working for one of the many stations owners or managers who were generally so timid in the years following enactment of the Fairness Doctrine, this would be a different history. Had any one of the three been working for one of the many station owners who considered news to be no more than another means of bringing in station revenue, it is not likely they could have showed the editorial courage they did. Had the three been editorializing in the 1990s, at a time when individual media outlets were being taken over by multimedia conglomerates, it is unlikely they would have had the freedom to embark upon the crusades that made them positive forces within their communities.<sup>697</sup>

---

<sup>696</sup> See Chapter 8.

<sup>697</sup> Ben Bagdikian, *The Media Monopoly*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 4, 5, 15, 30, 59, 205, 206. Bagdikian made the argument that, not only was media power becoming concentrated in fewer than a dozen big companies, but that those few companies did not offer even limited intellectual or editorial diversity because they were controlled by people of one, profit-oriented, big-business view.

### Motivation is Primary

There is both encouraging and discouraging news in this research for television journalists. It is encouraging to realize that a genuinely altruistic, community-minded journalist can have such an effect on a community. Norm Davis made note of that in his 1999 interview. What is discouraging for television news practitioners is that later so-called "community" efforts were driven as much by financial motivations as by the desire to do good journalism.

Success in the effort to better community is not the only measure of a community journalist. A more important measure is intent. That was the foremost difference found in comparing Brechner et al. with the 1990s community journalists. Brechner, Davis, and Renick were motivated by concern for their communities; they were motivated by belief in fairness; they were motivated by a belief that their positions carried a responsibility to use the means available to them to improve life in their communities. A better community life was the only reward they sought in embarking on editorial crusades. The 1990s community journalists were seeking a different kind of reward; they were reaching for increased readership and viewership. It was the bottom line that motivated them. It was not enhancement of community.

As Aristotle asserted, it is motivation that determines virtuousness. Motivation is primary.

#### Suggestions for Further Research

Avenues of future research to be explored are many and lead to two main roads: (1) community journalism; and (2) expanded work on Brechner, Davis, and Renick. As the press moves into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, community journalists will fine-tune the way they practice their brand of reporting. Researchers may be able to work from a clearer reference point if community journalists can finally define what they do and what community journalism is. As the century begins, there is no agreed-upon definition of community journalism--and no lines of demarcation between community journalism, public journalism, civic journalism, and the other appellations for this form of reporting. Once those distinctions are made, researchers will have some perspective from which they can begin looking back on the development of community journalism and how it has evolved. They will also be able to explore with more certainty the differences between the various branches of community journalism.

Much exploration is needed to determine why there was such a difference in the community journalism of Brechner, Davis, and Renick and community journalists of the 1990s.

Researchers will have to ask why willingness to risk alienation of audience and advertiser declined in the 1990s, even among those who professed a desire to use their journalism to improve society and to get more people involved in the workings of democracy. This research has shown there was a difference but has not attempted to determine precisely why.

This work has not included an examination of television editorialists of more recent times, but that, too, is an area with possibilities for future research. Of primary importance is the question of why there are so few who editorialize on TV as the Second Millennium begins. In October 1999, the Society of Professional Journalists dropped the broadcast editorials division from its national Sigma Delta Chi awards for excellence in journalism. A year earlier, the winner of the best editorials award had been chosen from a field of only three broadcasters who had submitted entries.<sup>698</sup> Perhaps some of the answers will be similar to the answers regarding the lack of courage in general on the part of modern-day broadcasters.

One possibility in examining that apparent lack of courage is the trend discussed earlier in this work toward

---

<sup>698</sup> "I Can't Hear You," *Broadcasting & Cable*, 14 June 2000, 1.

concentration of ownership. Already discussed is the management support afforded the three editorialists. Although Davis and Renick, and Brechner to a lesser degree, were working for companies with multiple holdings, those companies were small enough to be controlled by individuals. Those individuals expressed strong commitment to using their television stations to improve the communities in which they were located. Bagdikian's lamentation that media outlets are being bought up and subsumed into giant corporations at such a rapid rate that the number of editorial voices in society is rapidly declining has previously been cited in this work. Future researchers should find this area fertile in attempting to determine if true community journalism is still possible or is a victim of concentration of control of mass media.

A search of literature reveals no attempts to compare 1990s community journalists with the muckrakers of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. A modern-day researcher would find material for both comparison and contrast. The modern-day researcher will also find ample opportunity to compare and contrast the 1990s community journalists with journalists of other time periods in United States history. There were clearly elements of

community journalism, for instance, in the Revolutionary press and the abolitionist press of the Civil War era.

Jay Rosen, who has been cited in this work, based much of his own examination of community journalism on the Dewey/Lippmann argument over whether the public is capable of assuming an active role in its own governance. Although this is an area sometimes more comfortably examined by political scientists, it is still an area important to anyone exploring community journalism.

For historical researchers, it will be further examination of the work of Brechner, Davis, and Renick that will provide the richest possibilities. All three editorialists were multi-faceted. Brechner and Renick in particular are worthy of full biographies because of their contributions to the industry and their communities. Study of these editorialists will also be valuable for its contribution to research regarding the continuum of broadcasting. As previously mentioned, they illustrate a phase of broadcasting that appears to be a touchstone for responsible, effective editorializing that did not exist before the period studied and disappeared as the broadcast industry changed.

Brechner was active in civil rights even in the days of World War II when he wrote radio programs for the armed services. His early years as a professional broadcaster, spent in Silver Spring, Maryland, were when he first began editorializing. Brechner wrote opinion columns for the Orlando Sentinel for a decade after he was forced by the Federal Communications Commission to sell WFTV-TV.<sup>699</sup> Those columns continued many of the themes he first visited in his television editorials. His battle with the FCC over control of WFTV-TV became the longest-running fight of any individual broadcaster with the FCC in the Commission's history.

A major thrust of Brechner's effort during his broadcast career was in the area of freedom of information. He fought for decades for press access to courtroom proceedings and for public access to information on government activity. The Brechner Center for Freedom of Information at the University

---

<sup>699</sup> Brechner had operated WFTV on a temporary license since putting the station on the air. When other prospective operators applied for licenses to run the station, an FCC investigation found that one of the minor partners in the company had been involved in gambling. It was on that basis that the FCC determined another applicant would be awarded the license to operate WFTV and Brechner would be forced to sell his interest. Interview with Marion Brechner, 9 March 1998. Also vital to the decision to remove Brechner from station operation was the issue of minority ownership. Two black shareholders owned an interest in the group that was finally awarded the operating license for Channel 9. Linda Perry, "A TV Pioneer's Crusade," 153-154.



of Florida was established with a grant from Brechner to carry on his work. All of these factors make Brechner worthy of further study.

Ralph Renick continued to broadcast television news for two decades after the period covered by this research. He was considered a national figure in television news although working in a local market. He was a member of the National News Council, attempting to set standards of ethics for broadcast journalists. In addition, he retired from broadcasting temporarily to make a brief run for governor of the state of Florida. It was an unsuccessful attempt, and Renick returned to broadcasting.

The surviving family members of both Brechner and Renick have been cooperative in compiling information for this research and have provided much information that will be valuable in compiling biographies of both men. Those biographies are already in progress as of this writing.

APPENDIX A  
SAMPLE OF THE EDITORIALS OF JOE BRECHNER

Broadcast: November 1, 1963  
1:30, 6:00 and 11:00 P.M.

This is a WFTV News Editorial in the public interest--  
entitled:

EDITORIAL MAILBAG

Last Thursday, a WFTV editorial entitled "Rabble in Mario" urged that "the silent, fair minded citizens" of Florida recover control of their local areas which have become trouble-ridden by racial disturbances. The Channel 9 editorial said: "Central Florida must control rabble rousing on either side of the racial issue."

Today's Editorial Mailbag includes some of the reaction to last week's editorial.

A Sanford man says: "I am writing to tell you what I think of your TV editorials. They stink." The critic who reportedly is connected with the White Citizens Council says, "I would be ashamed a man with your intelligence to sit and praise the nigger not negro, like you do on TV."  
(UNQUOTE)

A Lake Alfred man suggested that we move North. His letter says, "If you do not approve of the way we feel in

---

Note: Hundreds of the editorials of Joe Brechner were examined during the course of this research. All of the Brechner editorials from the 1960s were perused.

The editorials chosen for Appendix A illustrate Brechner's strong editorial attack on the Ku Klux Klan, as well as viewer reaction to the editorials. There is also an editorial that illustrates his "It could happen here" strategy. The Brechner editorials are presented in chronological order.

the South suggest you catch a train with your 'pink' counterparts. We have not built a fence across the Mason-Dixon line and plenty of roads still point North."  
(UNQUOTE)

Channel 9 received two postcards, unsigned, but obviously from the same person. The cards from St. Cloud contained illiterate scribbling, but we could make out the vulgar phrase "nigger lover" on each card.

Most of the mail response to the WFTV editorial were simply requests for copies of the editorial. Many of the requests were from residents of Ocala. Some came without comment from officials in and around Ocala, the scene of recent racial disturbances.

A student from the University of South Florida requested copies of the editorial for use in connection with a course in Ethnic and Racial Relations. The student said: "I think that your editorial is so pertinent to the context of the course."

The varied reaction, particularly some of the violent reaction, caused us to review and study the editorial again very carefully. The letter from the previously quoted Sanford man said, "I heard you praise Martin Luther King and Roy Wilkins. I also heard you say that the KKK and the White Citizens Council were subversive." The letter writer claims, and we quote: "J. Edgar Hoover provided that Martin Luther King and Roy Wilkins were communists."

Reviewing the editorial we found no praise for anyone in the entire editorial. If J. Edgar Hoover has proved, as the writer declares, that Martin Luther King and Roy Wilkins are communists, WFTV's News Department has never received such a communication.

The editorial referred to the Ku Klux Klan as subversive because it is listed in the U.S. Attorney General's book of subversive organizations as "advocating violence" in attempting to carry out the purpose of their organization.

Today's Editorial Mailbag is an example of mediocre and primitive mentalities of those who support and advocate racial violence.

# # # # #

Broadcast: June 22, 1964  
1:30, 6:00 and 11:00 P.M.

This is a WFTV News Editorial in the public interest--  
entitled:

DANGER--COWARDS AT WORK

More and more reports crowded into the WFTV newsroom this week-end telling of gang terrorism and the cowardice of hiding in rioting crowds, in our neighbor city of St. Augustine.

(PHOTO) One report told of a group of white hoodlums which beat a white integrationist senseless and then tried to drown him, while a gang of Ku Klux Klansmen stood by urging them on.

This is a frighteningly sad case of advanced cowardice. As if the gang of toughs had not shown enough fear already when it took several of them to go after one man, rather than daring to make it a person to person showdown--if, indeed, that would have made sense--even more cowardice was shown by the adult members of the melee, the Klansmen, who stood safely out of range during the whole episode.

It seems most interesting to note that these so-called protectors of the South's sovereignty were the ones who bravely let others do their fighting for them, while they stood by shouting the equivalent of the old "Let's you and him fight" theme.

(PHOTO) While police, who seemed to be conscientiously arresting integrationist demonstrators while ignoring legal responsibilities in dealing with segregationists, were working on one incident our reports show another gang of brave hoodlums decided to show how tough they were by running at top speed into a group of young Negro girls, as the girls waded in the surf at the already integrated St. Augustine Beach.

One of the girls suffered a broken nose in the attack and others received minor injuries. And the hoods doubtless felt pleased with their strength and power, having beaten a group of young girls.

The cowardice of St. Augustine's leaders does little to lend encouragement to those hoping for the enforcement of law in that troubled city. When police and city officials are more afraid of the opinions of a noisy few than they are of eroding rights and freedoms everyone suffers.

When the toughs of St. Augustine feel there is enough safety in animal-like packs to ignore the laws of their communities it is time to remind them that within a few short weeks their same actions will be not only against local law, but the law of the land.

We hope that by then they will realize that our freedoms are guaranteed to each person individually as an American--not as the member of a lawless gang.

# # # # #

Broadcast: April 2, 1965  
1:45, 5:55 and 11:15 P.M.

This is a WFTV News Editorial in the public interest--  
entitled:

#### KLAN INVESTIGATION

As a result of recent violent deaths in the South and at the urging of President Johnson that the Ku Klux Klan must be stamped out, the House Un-American Activities Committee voted unanimously this week to investigate the Klan.

(SILENT FILM OF KKK RALLY--CROSSES BURNING)

Nationally, the Klan is not estimated to have a large membership--nothing compared to the membership in the 20's. According to United Press International, Klan membership in Florida is estimated at 1,000.

Active members still burn crosses of warning and fright and commit crimes of violence. KKK members still parade--in some areas unmasked as required now by local and state laws.

We've seen them in the streets of Atlanta during a state-wide and local election. They paraded recently in Jacksonville. (FILM OUT)

Here in Central Florida they have had cross burnings in the night at some outlying field. The Klan rarely permits photographers to take pictures of their cross burning rallies.

(PIC KKK STICKER) The KKK sticker is believed to be a warning to those who may disagree with the Klan's bigoted views. WFTV once had such a sticker pasted on our front door which read: "A Ku Klux Klansman was here."

The time has come to eliminate this vicious and dangerous organization which rides in the night to frighten, beat, bomb and murder without fear or apprehension and punishment. (PIC) We must rid ourselves of these shrouded examples of lawlessness from a better-to-be-forgotten past. The Klan's philosophies and activities have not only delayed progress in the South--but where they exist they have been a costly economic and social cancer.

The investigation to expose the Ku Klux Klan nationally will be lengthy and tedious. Local and state officials should begin now to put our house in order; to expose and discharge the die-hard Klansmen in Florida who have infiltrated into positions of public trust.

There should be no place in any public office or law enforcement agency for members of an organization that condones crime, including violence and murder.

Central Florida and the state have moved through these difficult times with a minimum of disturbance. We do not need, nor do we want, the questionable assistance of the Ku Klux Klan or any other terroristic organization.

WFTV agrees with Congressman Edwin Edward Willis of Louisiana, Chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee which will investigate the Klan. Congressman Willis said: "Klanism is incompatible with Americanism."

# # # # #

Broadcast: May 11, 1965  
1:45, 5:55 and 11:15 P.M.

This is a WFTV News Editorial in the public interest--  
entitled:

#### SOCIETY OF BIGOTS

The Ku Klux Klan is currently under the watchful eyes of the entire world. A Congressional committee is intensifying plans for a thorough investigation of the Klan. (PIC) It is likely that anti-Klan legislation may be forthcoming for the so-called "Invisible Empire" which is already on the Attorney General's list of subversive organizations. Although such legislation may be desirable it will not wipe out the Klan.

First, we should consider what type person belongs to the Klan and what type person and community either condones the existence of the KKK or closes its eyes to the Klan's unscrupulous activities and violence.

The North Carolina CHARLOTTE OBSERVER defined Klansmen in a series of articles. (PIC KLAN PICKETS) The report described members as "decent, simple people who turn to the Klan out of frustration." The report explained that KKK members are "the backwash of white society, the low income, the poorly educated laborer or farmer who sees in the Ku Klux Klan . . . the only hope of preserving his station in society's changing order." (UNQUOTE) The Ku Klux Klan may also include trouble-makers, bigots and maniacs. (PIC SHELTON) However, Robert Shelton, Imperial Wizard of the United Klans of America, said recently that the Klan is "trying to change its image." Shelton said: "We don't go in for floggin', lynchin', and hangin'." But when Shelton appeared before the Alabama Legislature to oppose an anti-flogging bill he said: "I am glad that there are still men somewhere who will take matters into their own hands when the hands of the law are tied." (UNQUOTE)

(PIC MAP) The Klan is concentrated in the South, with membership estimated at 10,000. Northeast Florida is the only section of the state where the Klan is significantly active. It is pitifully ironic that St. Augustine, the oldest city in America, is considered the stronghold of Florida's clandestine Klan.



Klan leaders deny that they espouse or practice bigotry. The "native-born white Protestant only" members prefer to consider themselves a "semi-religious, fraternal organization."

Following the church bombing in Birmingham that took the lives of 4 Negro children, a Klan organizer speaking in St. Augustine said: "I don't know who bombed that church in Birmingham but if I did, I'd pin a medal on him."  
(UNQUOTE)

(PIC KKK CARTOON) Such deranged minds in control of a secret organization, no matter how small it may be, are a dangerous threat to any community. And the problem rests with the community. Legislation or denunciation will do no good unless the responsible citizens of local communities are aroused and openly resist and deplore the very existence of any organization that thrives on hatred and violence.

The Klan will only be eliminated if Southern citizens and civic leaders themselves, and particularly state and local political officials and law enforcement officers, forcefully and wholeheartedly state their revulsion and refuse support to this society of bigots know as the Ku Klux Klan.

# # # # #

Broadcast: November 2, 1965  
12:45, 5:55 and 11:15 P.M.

This is a WFTV News Editorial in the public interest--  
entitled:

#### SNIPES AND GRIPES

Today's snipes and gripes from viewers concern  
politics, the Ku Klux Klan and the John Birch Society.

A Winter Haven student wrote saying: (PIC LETTER) "I  
suspect your policies on the K.K.K. and John Birch Society.  
But I don't think you should take sides in political  
elections." The tenth grade student said: "Remember there  
are still some Republicans." (UNQUOTE)

In answer, Channel 9 and its management are members of  
the community and reserve the right of freedom of  
expression and opinions on any phase of community life. We  
believe in a two party system and have said so many times.  
We try to balance comment on issues between the parties and  
if, when the parties agree as on the road bond issue here  
in Central Florida, we invite participants from both  
parties. When management gives an editorial opinion, the  
opinion is based on all known facts from all sides on an  
issue, with admittedly whatever basic philosophy or  
prejudice we may have toward public issues.

A Rockledge viewer sent for a recent Channel 9  
editorial which discussed the John Birch Society. (PIC  
LETTER) The letter said: "I would like to show it to the  
rest of my secret Un-American group." The viewer said: "I  
agree with you about the K.K.K. The are secret. We are  
not." (UNQUOTE)

Channel 9 has heard this story many times. Yet the  
fact remains that John Birch Society membership figures are  
secret--probably because membership is so low. John Birch  
group meetings are secrete and closed to the news media.  
Channel 9 has been refused admittance on many occasions.  
The only time the John Birch Society is open and public is  
when Society public relations representatives want to issue  
a statement, or their speakers want to take the speaker's  
platform to propagandize their organization and sell what  
we believe are radical, unsound, illogical political views.

A Winter Haven viewer wrote concerning the John Birch Society. The letter was signed "R. Welch." Either the viewer was pulling our leg, or there's another R. Welch besides the president of the Society. (PIC LETTER) The letter said: "I notice since the Chicago Tribune has set up shot in Orlando, your editorials aren't as far to the lunatic left. Are you chicken?" (UNQUOTE)

Channel 9 has made no analysis of the editorial policies of the local newspaper. We have agreed and disagreed with the views of the newspaper. Our editorial decisions are based upon our own consideration, views and position which has been consistent throughout the years--although we are prepared to change our position based upon new facts or our own revised convictions.

The issue isn't whether we're chicken. We do our best to be factually correct, direct and forthright. And we will continue to do the best we can with only one objective: to state an honest opinion.

That's snipes and gripes for another day. If you have one, send it to WFTV, Channel 9, Orlando, Florida, for consideration in the next Snipes and Gripes editorial.

# # # # #

Broadcast: December 8, 1965  
12:45, 5:55 and 11:15 P.M.

This is a WFTV News Editorial in the public interest--  
entitled:

#### JUSTICE AND CHANGING ATTITUDES

"The whole nation can take heart from the fact that there are those in the south who believe in justice in racial matters and who are determined not to stand for acts of violence and terror." (PIC JOHNSON) This was the statement President Lyndon Johnson released after it was announced that an all-white jury in Montgomery, Alabama, had convicted three Ku Klux Klansmen on federal charges that grew out of the Selma freedom March, and the subsequent slaying of Mrs. Viola Liuzzo.

Seven months ago one of the men convicted last week stood trial for the murder of Mrs. Liuzzo. At that time a Channel 9 editorial said: "The trial and the verdict is a legal matter. But the climate of hate which led to the murder and prevailed during the trial itself is a warning bell to other communities."

(PIC 3 MEN) Some may feel that the 10 year sentences imposed against the three Ku Klux Klansmen was shallow justice. But the jury's verdict was an indication of the changing times and attitudes.

Some sections of the South have been accused of unreasonable and unjust racial practices and of maintaining a tradition which leads to hate and violence. There have been time in the past when the actions of some Southern all-white juries made a mockery of justice. But we feel confident that today, and in the future, juries will be influenced less by tradition or prejudice. This conscience of each citizen in each local community is becoming as it should be--the only determining factor of behavior and judgment in and out of the courtrooms.

(PIC RIOT) Communities throughout the nation--large or small--have witnessed the moral and political deterioration of communities where fear and violence have prevailed. On the other hand, they have seen the peaceful progress that is possible where understanding, reasonableness and fair and sensible judgment prevail.

(PIC 3 MEN) It is not proper for those of us outside the courtroom to judge the innocence or guilt of those who have been accused of heinous crimes against their fellow man. But each citizen, each community, and the entire nation must bear the responsibility of justice miscarried, and an environment that breeds and permeates hatred and violence anywhere within our country.

Most communities in Florida have met changing times with moderation and common sense. We see similar intelligent progress throughout the nation. There may be temporary set-backs and unexpected problems. But so long as this national insistence prevails for fair play, equal justice and common rights for all, our nation is well on the road to solving the difficulties of human relations in our complex society.

# # # # #

Broadcast: January 6, 1966  
12:45, 5:55 and 11:15 P.M.

This is a WFTV News Editorial in the public interest--  
entitled:

### FREEDOM'S INTRUDERS

The recent squabble over continued investigation of the Ku Klux Klan by the House Committee on Un-American Activities and the investigation itself may prove of some value to the American public.

Even the small amount of information coming out of the investigation only confirms what we've said all along--the Ku Klux Klan is a "kooky" secret, subversive racket. When the hoods come off and the truth is revealed, or their leaders resort to constitutional amendments to avoid testifying, the public has seen a dismal display of cowardice, bigotry and deceit.

In the past few years organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan, the pseudo-conservative groups such as the John Birch Society, White Citizens Council, the so-called anti-Communist and self-styled Christian Crusade societies, alleged patriotic organizations and a variety of other self-serving groups have been rebuffed, shunned and ignored by the majority of the citizens of our communities.

A few years ago organization meetings and speeches by itinerant speakers were widely publicized and created a furor of comment and discussion. (CARTOON) In recent months some meetings have been held; some of the same traveling "hate-for-sale" peddlers have been in Central Florida, but the public has generally turned a cold shoulder to these unwelcome visitors who thrive on discord and generalized charges, and innuendoes to slander responsible citizens and organizations.

We can't say this is true everywhere in the country, but Central Florida has weathered the storm of extremist rabble-rousing and we feel confident the trend will not change.

Public exposure and discussion may be responsible for the current public contempt in which these irresponsible groups and individuals are held. Many of the individuals and organizations which have operated, (CARTOON) or

occasionally visited in our area, came in with high-sounding programs and purpose. But when they were exposed to public discussion and debate they are revealed as intruders and hate-mongers who would upset the tranquility of our community and walk away with the money collected from the frightened and the gullible, with no accounting for the use of the funds.

Central Florida has managed to escape some of the viciousness that has penetrated other fear-ridden communities which fell prey to extremists. We have been able to discuss and debate conservative, moderate and liberal views without resorting to subversion and deceit to stifle or limit honest, open democratic discussion. (CARTOON) National leaders in both parties have now openly condemned and rebuked extremists who breed national dissension and suspicion.

Extremist business has been bad business in our communities. And now it has become less profitable in other parts of the nation.

But we cannot let down our guard.

To maintain our freedom we must constantly protect it.

# # # # #

Broadcast: September 13, 1966  
12:45, 5:55 and 11:15 P.M.

This is a WFTV News Editorial in the public interest--  
entitled:

#### ATLANTA VIOLENCE

It was a thought-provoking moment we saw on television the other evening when Atlanta Mayor Ivan Allen walked through the streets of his city alone in the quiet aftermath of a race riot. (PIC MAYOR ALLEN) His courage in personally attempting to prevent the riot was matched by his philosophic observations later that night when he was interviewed by a television newsman.

While personally distressed at his own failure to prevent the riot, Mayor Allen deserves praise for his personal effort to prevent what could have become a much more serious situation. His strict and stern enforcement of the law may well have accounted for the minimum damage and minimum injuries that resulted from the riot. (PIC) While placing the blame for the violence on some irresponsible Negro leaders, the mayor also recognized and showed a deep understanding of the conditions which made it possible for those leaders to stir up trouble. He pointed out the continuing problem of big cities attracting more people from smaller towns and rural areas. Many newcomers are unprepared for the difficulties of living in a big city. As the Mayor said, many new city dwellers are untrained, unqualified for other than the most menial work; they don't know how to seek help and assistance; and they move into already crowded areas creating conditions within certain neighborhoods that are intolerable.

Mayor Allen emphasized that there was much work to be done in restraining such individuals, as well as to provide decent housing. The Mayor said: "That is why we are doing everything possible and are seeking every available amount of federal assistance to clear out our slums and to improve living conditions." (UNQUOTE)

It is this recognition of the facts of life--this understanding--which marked Mayor Allen's full comprehension of the issues.

(PIC) These observations and the experience in Atlanta should serve as a guide to city officials throughout the



country and within the state of Florida. Every responsible official and community leader should recognize the conditions that lead to racial disturbance within a community.

False economies and confused philosophies which prevent quick rehabilitation of slum areas add up to indifference and neglect that could lead to trouble. Only the most short-sighted and the foolish would block the acceptance of federal funds provided from taxes paid by local citizens and businesses which could be used to speed up the progress of slum clearance, along with educational and training programs and other devices of the war on poverty programs.

(CARTOON) Economizing or philosophizing on slum clearance and human problems instead of organized efforts to improve living conditions can prove to be false economy and costly neglect.

# # # # #

Broadcast: October 17, 1967  
12:45, 6:25 and 11:20 P.M.

This is a WFTV News Editorial in the public interest--  
entitled:

#### RENEWED MENACE

If there is anything not needed in Central Florida in our efforts to develop growth and expansion, it is the renewed menace of the Ku Klux Klan. (PIC CLAN POSTER)

Recent intensified efforts by Robert Shelton, the Imperial Wizard of the United Klans of America, indicate that he and his hooded cohorts want to make Central Florida a major Klan concentration center.

Now appealing his conviction on Contempt of Congress, a sentence of a year in prison, Shelton is striving to renew the strength of the KKK by holding rallies and membership drives here in Florida. After considerable inside fighting among various Klan factions, Shelton has restored his control over the United Klan. (SILENT FILM)

Last weekend the United Klan held rallies in Lake Wales and Orlando. By our count some 400 persons, including Klan leaders and security guards attended the meeting at Kemp's Coliseum here in Orlando. The KKK held a small motorcade through the city and concluded their meeting with a cross burning in the patio area of Kemp's Coliseum.

While the issue of freedom of speech and assembly is basic in the land, the issue of Klan activity here represents a renewed menace to the progress of tranquility of Central Florida.

The very history of the Klan in the South, its violence, its vigilantism, its use of terror and force to impose its malicious will upon citizens, constitutes an undesirable and repulsive intrusion in our state and community affairs.

Those who confuse the Klan with legitimate political organizations overlook the long history of graft, financial exploitation of dupes and their violations of the laws and decency involving murder, mutilation and destruction.

Current and past trials give some indication of depraved philosophies upon which this secret organization is based. Posing as defenders of Christianity and Democracy, they debase both. Like the infamous Nazis they use current fears and concerns of Communism to exploit their own vicious racial and political concepts to promote discord and violence.

The pit one American against another based upon false and phony racial, religious and political differences.  
(SILENT FILM)

The overwhelming majority of Americans reject and oppose extremism either from the left or right, and racial bigots.

We urge local citizens and business people to withstand the pressure and threat of the Ku Klux Klan and urge them to withhold support of this subversive group.

There is no good in this renewed menace wearing the white shrouds of a better-to-be-forgotten past which in the name of Christianity, Democracy and white supremacy preaches evil and contempt of law and order.

# # # # #

Broadcast: October 30, 1967  
12:45, 6:25 and 11:20 P.M.

This is a WFTV News Editorial in the public interest--  
entitled:

REACTION TO BIG QUESTION RESULTS

Last week 9's BIG QUESTION polled viewers on flying saucers and the Ku Klux Klan.

57% of those who phoned in said they believe flying saucers come from outer space. 52% of the callers aid they approved of the Ku Klux Klan.

Here's the reaction of several viewers who wrote to Channel 9. (PIC LETTER)

An Orlando viewer wrote: "I don't propose here to state whether I do or do not believe U.F.O.'s come from outer space. But I do submit this thought. The so-called credibility gap between our Federal Administration and the general public is growing so wide that we, the public, would feel compelled to check our calendars before we would accept the Administration's word for the fact that tomorrow is Friday." (UNQUOTE)

There is often a great credibility gap between the truth and what we want to believe. It's called the gullibility gap. (PIC LETTER)

A Melbourne Beach viewer said: "We awaited with interest to see the votes on the KKK being a good thing. When you mentioned it (before the votes came in) I layed a bet that that's the way it would turn out." The viewer said, "If I was a KKK I would make sure of the vote because what would be to prevent me from making 20-50 or a thousand phone calls myself to turn the tide?" (UNQUOTE)

The answer, of course, is other viewers calling. The phones were busy all night. When a viewer completes a call, the lines are immediately tied up by other viewers who are waiting.

The percentage may be inaccurate but, in our opinion, the results indicated that those who support or approve of the KKK are an active, dangerous force in this area and can't be dismissed lightly. Citizens, business groups,

civic groups and area and state officials must disavow any approval, support or sympathy for these paranoid night-riders who threaten the peace and tranquility of our community.

A Lake Alfred viewer said: "Does it really matter that over 50% of the people in Central Florida believe that Flying Saucers come from outer space?" The viewer said, "It surely is far more disturbing that over 50% of the people who phoned in answers to your (Big Question) approve of the KKK." (PIC LETTER)

The viewer added: "I have yet to see the little green men with antennae so I don't credit their existence, but I have seen some horrifying news releases about the activities of the Klan, and these people are here and now." (UNQUOTE)

That's what Channel 9 said last week. "We've got enough down-to-earth problems without wasting time worrying about mythical problems." The Ku Klux Klan offers dangerous, un-American panaceas that are out of this world when it comes to meeting our real problems of the day.

# # # # #

Broadcast: November 8, 1967  
12:45, 6:25 and 11:20 P.M.

This is a WFTV News Editorial in the public interest--  
entitled:

### KKK MENACE

A viewer objected to a recent Channel 9 editorial on the renewed menace of the Ku Klux Klan. The viewer's letter said: "I am a Klan member and we are not dangerous as you said." (PIC LETTER) The letter said, "We shouldn't be called night riders and dangerous because it isn't true." (UNQUOTE)

The Klan has been holding frequent membership drives and Klan rallies in the Central Florida area. Apparently some people have been hoodwinked by Klan leaders who have strong-armed their way to leadership in the secret underworld of bigots and trouble makers known as the Ku Klux Klan.

The Klan claims to represent God-fearing Christians dedicated to a life of "chivalry, honor, industry, patriotism and love." They say they support law enforcement. Yet the Klan and its members, by word and action, are a continuing menace to the peace and tranquility of our communities. Klan leaders and Klansmen openly preach hatred--not love. The Klan record includes destruction of property, assault and murder. The Klan claim of supporting law and order is contradicted by its long history of terror and violence.

Law breakers and persons charged with vicious crimes or of questionable personal records and backgrounds have been honored by the Klan as worthy members or leaders.

Klansmen travel throughout the area causing trouble and disrupting meetings designed to solve problems. (PIC FIGHT) When they find disagreement with their own bigoted views, Klansmen react by shoving people around.

Is the Klan and its membership dangerous? There's no question in our mind that the Klan and Klansmen try to rule and attempt to take over communities by threat and fear. Is it any wonder that respectable peace loving citizens fear the Klan and its night riding vigilantes?

Decent, law abiding citizens must not compromise their principles and beliefs in love, honor and patriotism to support the double-talking, dangerous philosophies of these hooded kooks who make a mockery of religion and law and order.

The Klan must not be confused with a legitimate political or fraternal organization. It is a secret, dangerous gang of hoodlums. It is a menace to Southern progress. The Klan is an outmoded form of vigilantism. It is no good and means no good.

# # # # #

Broadcast: November 17, 1967  
12:45, 6:25 and 11:20 P.M.

This is a WFTV News Editorial in the public interest--  
entitled:

CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER

Channel 9 has disclosed recent attempts to increase Ku Klux Klan membership in Central Florida.

This Sunday WFTV's VIEWPOINT 9 will present a program produced in South Florida on the KKK in that area. A portion of the program was filmed in Orlando last month when Robert Shelton, Imperial Wizard of United Klans of America, held a Klan rally at Kemp's Auditorium. In Sunday's program Mr. Shelton explains what he calls his "ballots not bullets" theory. He also admits that some members of the Klan are disenchanted and dissatisfied.

We have a pretty good idea what Robert Shelton is talking about. Some Klan leaders and members in Florida have discounted his speeches of non-violence. Klan leaders and members in other parts of the nation and even here in Central Florida carry and use weapons and have resorted to violence, threats and public disturbances.

Channel 9 news has received reports from frightened citizens who complain about threats from Klansmen. Our newsroom has also received threats of bodily harm if we continue to criticize the Klan.

Yet the protection of the public against these marauding and dangerous Klansmen seems wholly inadequate. The State of Florida grants charter for incorporation to these disreputable groups. State and local laws are inadequate affecting public disturbances, the making of threats, carrying concealed weapons and the use of such weapons in a dangerous manner.

Permits to parade and to hold public meetings are granted as if this group were some boy scout organization. Officials do not seriously consider that the Klan constitutes a danger to the community and a criminal conspiracy to violate the rights, the life and property of other citizens.



Violation of laws here in Orange County are dealt with too leniently with small fines as if these actions were minor disturbances.

In one Central Florida community a Klan leader was charged with disorderly conduct. Bond was set at \$350. The same Klan leader was arrested in Orange County on charges of carrying a concealed weapon. His bond was set at \$50. His companion was charged with unlawfully exhibiting and firing a weapon in a dangerous manner. His bond was set at \$50. This is the amount of bond you would expect for a reckless driving charge.

Certainly it is time for a review and a crackdown on Klan activities here. State and local laws must be reviewed and strengthened to meet Klan challenges and threats.

Law enforcement and our courts must use the full extent of existing laws to punish and if possible to eliminate the misuse of weapons and the use of threats that endanger the citizens of our area.

It is time for a full investigation of the Klan in our area and a clear indication by our leaders and citizens that we don't want them here and that we will not tolerate their sick and vicious efforts to destroy the peace and tranquility of our communities.

# # # # #

(Used silent film Ku Klux Klan marching in Washington)

Broadcast: November 24, 1967  
12:45, 6:25 and 11:20 P.M.

This is a WFTV News Editorial in the public interest--  
entitled:

REACTION TO THE KU KLUX KLAN

We received a number of letters from viewers concerning last week's editorial on the Ku Klux Klan and WFTV's VIEWPOINT 9 program last Sunday on the Klan.

An Intercession City viewer called the Klan "God's people." She said: "All the more slander and so much lies about God's people you're giving the enemies of God and country, the Communists, a rest, and they are doing everything to take our country."

A Winter Haven viewer wrote: "If I had to choose I'd rather be a (Klan Member) than a (Communist). That's the way I see it."

Apparently these two viewers believe Klan propaganda which would have us believe the Ku Klux Klan is a anti-Communist organization instead of race-baiting bigots whose members resort to threats and violence.

An Orlando viewer claimed the Klan protected women and girls in the community. He said: "I don't believe in violence or for people to take the law in their own hands but at times I feel we need some help like the K.K.K. and they should remain with us."

We received other letters from viewers opposed to the Klan. An Orlando viewer said: "This secret organization, ruling by fear and ignorance, is indeed a threat, not only to the citizens of Central Florida but to all the citizens in each state where it is allowed to exist."

A Tavares viewer said: "I agree that the state should not allow secret hate organizations to operate in Florida. And to have a boy scout troop with a leader who belongs to such an organization is a crime against our youth. Children should not be taught prejudice or hate of any human beings by adults."

The Sunday program on the Ku Klux Klan explained that one Klansman in South Florida was a boy scout leader and had been passing out Klan literature to the boy scouts.

Another Tavares viewer wrote: "If I could do something to help get rid of this vile organization, I would do it. But, what can I do?" The viewer, who said her grandfather was a Klan member, added: "No citizen, no matter who he is or what his profession, will be safe till the Klan is eliminated permanently." (UNQUOTE)

In our opinion the answer for the individual is to express your point of view whenever you can. Don't support the Klan in any way. Tell law enforcement officials you disapprove of individuals who carry concealed weapons. Urge and support investigation and prosecution of any group or individual that threatens or uses violence. Urge your church, business and social organizations to oppose those who preach hatred and violence such as the Klan.

In every way possible responsible citizens should let the Ku Klux Klan know we don't want them here and we will not tolerate their continued efforts to disrupt our peaceful communities.

In the ultimate support fair play, honesty and openness in government and civic endeavors. The greatest danger to our democracy is secrecy in government, politics and law enforcement or private vigilante groups who want to take the law into their own hands.

# # # # #

APPENDIX B  
SAMPLE OF THE EDITORIALS OF NORM DAVIS

TELEVISED THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 1965/6:00 P.M. AND 11:00 P.M.

This is a WJXT editorial.

After burning up considerable energy in recent weeks arguing that it didn't have the power to crack down on the City's lavish automobile practices, the City Council showed this week that it has the power, after all, by hammering out some overdue changes in the system. The result was two ordinances and a resolution which will produce a city car pool and some needed changes in budgetary practices.

As far as they go, the new procedures will make inroads on a spoils system which has prospered at taxpayer expense for a great many years. And yet the biggest hole in the dike through which tax dollars can continue to flow has not yet been plugged. Neither the Commission nor the Council has taken any overt steps to alter a policy which has condoned the purchase of more than a hundred high-priced luxury cars and a long list of expensive accessories for these and other vehicles. In spite of the rules adopted this week, there is no overall policy which requires the use of compact cars and other lower-priced vehicles and no regulation of the purchase of costly

---

Note: There were fewer editorials available from Norm Davis than for the other two editorialists. Mister Davis had saved approximately 100 editorials, all of which were examined. The period of Davis editorials studied for this research was also much shorter than for Brechner and Renick.

Several of the samples of Davis' work concern the inefficiency he saw in local government are included here. The remaining editorials were chosen to represent Davis' editorials focused on corruption in the government of the city of Jacksonville and the county of Duval. The editorials are presented in chronological order.

"extras" throughout the automobile fleet. While the new budgetary procedures will permit the Council to scrutinize purchasing more closely, it would seem desirable for the Council or the Commission to establish formal guidelines on purchasing to preclude bargaining pressures at budget time. The City code evidently contained provisions of this nature some fifteen years ago which since have been rescinded.

Taxpayers also should have a continuing interest in the present City policy which provides flat automobile allowances--usually about \$50 per month--to more than 200 employees. The allowances are awarded whether a car actually is used or not, and they amount to about \$135,000 per year.

Then there's the unresolved matter of gasoline credit cards now held by 69 employees of the City. The cards ostensibly have been provided so drivers can obtain high octane gas for their high-compression engines, but a car pool and a reduction in the use of large cars with high-powered engines should obviate the need to parcel out these permits.

The Council's action this week is an encouraging sign that some new vitality may be developing in the city's legislative body. If the Council will be as attentive to other phases of the automobile issue and to other serious problems confronting the City it can count on growing popular support.

This was a WJXT editorial.

TELEVISED MAY 6, 1965/6:00 P.M. AND 11:00 P.M.

This is a WJXT editorial.

The feeling is inescapable that the surface has only been scratched on questionable practices within Jacksonville's city government, and the feeling has been reinforced most strongly by the actions and words of a number of city officials.

For the first time in years, close attention is being given to some amazing procedures on buying, bidding, and budgeting, and the process is, we hope, only beginning. Much of the current furor revolves around a complex game engaged in by the Council in shifting funds among various accounts--a practice which puts the Council in a position to wheel-and-deal. Then, of course, there's the matter of city automobiles, which admittedly have been bought by Commissioners from friends without competitive bidding and in which dozens of city employees have ridden in something approaching splendor for years. Disclosure of the Recreation Department's bidding habits opened up still another chapter.

Throughout all of this, a not-unusual reaction from the officials involved has been to point the finger of blame at somebody else or to register shock that any criticism should arise. Many unsound procedures have been defended only on the grounds of their having been used for many years and not because of any inherent value. In some cases, the law has been looked on as something to be applied when convenient. As one Commissioner put it to the legislative delegation, "We feel like we have not been violating the intent of the law--except in a few instances like buying cars." Various city officials have detailed quite a few other projects on which competitive bidding was bypassed by piecemeal buying.

One of the most startling revelations was an admission by the City Council's special auditor that he had been told "a hundred times" he would be fired if he put criticisms in his audit reports.

The legislative delegation has been incensed by this panorama to the point of proposing, among other things, a comprehensive audit of the City's books and changes in the budget law to prohibit fund transfers and to require more

competitive bidding. Some City officials seem to look on these as drastic measures, but they really reflect good business practice.

The City's role in all of this has been most revealing, for there has been no outpouring of indignation among City officials generally over the many recent disclosures. Instead, many people in high places have found it easy to rationalize their actions and policies.

Legislative measures will help to improve the situation, but what is needed most of all are new attitudes among some of the occupants of City Hall toward the conduct of the public's business.

This was a WJXT editorial.

TELEvised FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 1966/6:00 P.M. AND 11:00 P.M.

Mayor Ritter and Commissioner Broadstreet have reacted to WJXT's special report on the acquisition of a \$55,000 truck-crane combination with a flurry of denials and counterclaims, but the net result is that the City is painted deeper than ever into a corner.

The crane was obtained by the City from a local company early in 1965--without competitive bidding--on a lease arrangement which gives the City the option to apply rental money to full purchase. Pinning down responsibility for the deal has been like trying to catch an agitated ping-pong ball. Commissioner Broadstreet has disclaimed any part in the arrangement, saying it was executed while Mayor Ritter was still Commissioner of highways and sewers. The Mayor, meanwhile, has turned up a letter signed by Broadstreet in January 1965 which closed the deal for the City with the local supplier. Yet at the time the negotiations took place, Ritter was the elected official in charge and Broadstreet was employed as City Engineer--which seems to plant the responsibility for policy decisions at the time at Mr. Ritter's feet.

City officials can't even agree among themselves on whether the crane has, in fact, been purchased or only leased. The Auditor's office in City Hall indicates the crane will be bought and paid for by the end of the year, but Commissioner Broadstreet has been quoted to the effect that the City does not own the crane and that the firm from which the City has rented the device can haul it away at any time.

If this incredible statement is rue, then the City has been a party to a really fantastic lease. During 1965, payments of about \$24,000 were disbursed by the City to the lease-holder, and the current municipal budget contains an additional \$25,000 for payment to this particular firm during 1966. By the end of this year, therefore, the City will have paid some \$49,000 for the crane, and that happens to be close to the full retain cost for the equipment. If Mr. Broadstreet's assertion is correct that the dealer could retrieve the equipment now if he wants to, the City would be out almost \$30,000 as of today. If the City of Jacksonville doesn't wind up as the crane's owner, this will have been the most unbelievably expensive lease we've ever heard of.



One of the continuing mysteries is why the City solicited price quotations on the crane from three local dealers three months after the City has taken possession of the unit.

Whether the crane has been purchased or leased--or both--the fact remains that the City failed to call for bids which might have saved considerable money. The morning newspaper today quotes Mayor Ritter as saying, "When you ask for bids, that means you intend to buy, not rent," but the Mayor should know better than that. Over in the court house, for instance, the Duval County Patrol periodically executes a lease for its entire fleet of patrol cars, and open, competitive bidding is utilized.

The case of the costly crane illustrates anew the extent to which the City frequently goes to avoid possible savings of taxpayers' money.

This was a WJXT editorial.

TELEVISED FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 1966/ 6:00 P.M. AND 11:00 P.M.

Much has been said of the bewildering structure of government within the City of Jacksonville--the bizarre Council-Mayor-Commission arrangement which causes political scientists and ordinary citizens alike to shake their heads in consternation. But keeping track of the seats of authority and responsibility in county government requires a scorecard which is even more baffling.

County government, remember, was devised in the last century when Florida's population lived in rural areas and very small towns, but today this loosely-connected cluster of boards, authorities, and officials is being forced to grapple with the enormous task of providing urban services for a huge metropolitan area. Because most of the county functions have been rigidly institutionalized by the Constitution or by state law, overall direction, leadership, and responsibility have been impossible.

In county government alone, more than 60 offices in Duval are filled by election. This awesome total is bad enough, but combined with state and municipal races it produces an incredibly long ballot that conspires against good government. Hardly one person in ten thousand has the vaguest idea of the duties and qualifications of, say, the Clerk of the Criminal Court, which is an elective office. The same is true of the office of Tax Collector, a position which is important for its record-keeping role but which has little or nothing to do with the shaping of public policy. We might well ask why it is necessary for the occupants of these offices to be elected. Or take the post of Constable, which also has its roots in a bygone era of rural law enforcement. The continued existence of the office itself is debatable, and it surely no longer deserves a place on the ballot. It may be useful to amend the Constitution and the statutes to get government services like these more in tune with present-day needs.

It goes without saying that virtually every officeholder in the court house will band with his colleagues to resist any change that might affect him--however ineffective the overall system may be. The Local Government Study Commission of Duval County has the difficult duty of cutting through whatever layers of self-interest may prevail to get at the root causes of confusing, costly, and ineffective local government.

hopefully, this Commission will have recommendations for us by the end of this year for an improved governmental structure that would be understandable in function, responsive on election day, and efficient in providing service. The Study Commission consists of local people who are involved in a local solution to a serious problem of local government, and it deserves our enthusiastic support.

This was a WJXT editorial.

TELEVISED MONDAY, APRIL 11, 1966/6:00 P.M. AND 11:00 P.M.

The time is appropriate for the community to take a hard look at the City's mammoth electric power system and the controls under which it operates. As one of the largest municipally-owned power systems in the nation it has a \$50,000,000 annual budget which is larger than all other City expenditures combined. The utility is very big business, indeed, but there are important weaknesses in its structure which pose dangers for the public's interest.

At the top of the utility's management structure, it has been quite obvious that this \$50,000,000 business has been chiefly under the direction of one man--the utilities Commissioner. The City charter makes the entire City Commission responsible for the operation of this great monopoly, but experience shows that this is just so much window-dressing and that the Commissioners adhere quite rigidly to the philosophy under which "you run your departments and I'll run mine."

No other public agency in Duval County with expenditures on the order of those within the electric power system is left to the direction of any one man. The hazards of depending on a single executive to make major planning decisions involving millions of dollars of public money have come to the fore in recent months in the controversy over the new Northside generating plant. Other examples could be cited.

Controls also are grossly inadequate at the level of the consumer. Let us remember that this is a monopoly and that special precautions are necessary to protect the public. Most of the electric revenues derived by the local utility come from outside the City, but the customers who provide this money are totally deprived of a voice on the operation of the utility or its rate schedule. Non-city residents cannot vote for or against the City Commissioners, nor have they any right of appeal to the state Public Service Commission, which regulates other public utilities. This is a thoroughly illogical state of affairs which subjects a majority of electric customers to the dictates of a minority.

Since electric service is a countywide function, it should in some manner be responsive to voters throughout the county. And because the provision of electric service

is a technical and highly complex operation involving immense sums of public money, some provision should be made for vesting policy decisions in a board of directors of some type which would have both the time and the ability to effectively supervise such a huge operation. We urge the Local Government Study Commission to give this matter a high priority in its examination of governmental problems in Duval County.

This was a WJXT editorial.

TELEVISED WEDNESDAY, MAY 18 1966/6:00 P.M. AND 11:00 P.M.

A probe by WJXT News into the purchase and use of asphalt by the Duval County Commission has produced an increasingly sticky situation about which four of the Commissioners--Harris, Morgan, Merrett, and Stokes--have pleaded ignorance.

The case has several elements, including the fact that one company--Peninsula Asphalt--has been the sole bidder for the past three years. During that time the county has paid Peninsula 10.47 cents per gallon for asphalt which was supplied to Peninsula by the Shell Oil Company. Oddly enough, however, Shell's posted market price for similar asphalt--which is an over-the-counter price f.o.b. Jacksonville--is 10 cents per gallon. At WJXT's request, an inquiry was directed today to the offices of two major oil companies in Duval County on the cost of asphalt like that used by the county. One company quoted a price of 9.5 cents per gallon. Not long ago a neighboring county--Volusia--obtained a bid of 9 cents per gallon f.o.b. Jacksonville.

The substance of all this is that Duval County's bidding procedures have produced a price which is higher than the going rate to private business and at least one other county. It is impossible to calculate the tax money that has been wasted on asphalt in recent years, but with purchases of more than four million gallons involved the loss must run high into the thousands of dollars.

There are serious questions about Duval's bid solicitations. One major oil company says it has been frozen out of the bidding on at least part of Duval's asphalt needs by the language of the specifications.

Another mystery surrounds the paving of access roads to two private firms by county crews using county asphalt. Court House records do not show that the county submitted bills for the work, but both firms were billed by Peninsula Asphalt and one of these companies actually remitted payment to Peninsula. This is a weird set of circumstances which the Commissioners have failed to explain.

The Commissioners have indicated they plan to re-advertise for bids on asphalt, and this is a constructive move. But the taxpayers are entitled to much better

explanations for the year-in, year-out waste of money which has taken place. A plea of ignorance does not suffice, for the responsibility belongs to the Commission.

This was a WJXT editorial.

TELEVISED AUGUST 15, 1966/6:00 P.M. AND 11:00 P.M.

If the amount of money wasted by the City of Jacksonville over the years on automobiles, insurance, electric utility poles, kerosene, and sundry other items could somehow be totaled, the figure would be astounding. The fat contained in any City budget in the last few years surely amounted to at least half a million dollars, and conceivably much more. City tax bills have been inflated, as a result, by two, three, or more mills than necessary. This is waste on a majestic scale--what the recent Grand Jury report calls "municipal spending at its worst."

This bounty from the taxpayers has found its way into the pockets of favored local businesses, and whether any of these profits ever found their way back to City Hall as campaign contributions or otherwise is something the individual citizen will have to decide for himself. City officials have been decidedly unenthusiastic about proposals to adopt tighter campaign contribution rules, and they have almost to a man been unwilling to list the names of donors in past political campaigns.

The City Commission's responsibility for the inexcusable conditions described in many WJXT Special Reports and now confirmed by the Grand Jury is obvious. This is the body which prepares the budgets and actually spends the money. The only Commissioner who can argue his innocence at this point is George Moseley, who assumed the post of utilities commissioner a few short months ago. For the record it should be noted that Governor Haydon Burns was Mayor-Commissioner during most of the period covered by the Grand Jury inquiry.

But accountability for the City's spending spree also belongs to the nine members of the City Council, whose annual duty it is to approve the budget submitted by the Commission. The Council's most ambitious effort in recent years toward curbing needless spending was a meaningless resolution calling on all City departments to practice economy. The Council repeatedly hides behind alleged limits in the charter on what it can do, and never really has exercised the powers it has. The Council could have trimmed the total amount in various insurance or automobile accounts, for example, but it did not. Not once did the Council require Commissioners to justify publicly the money they were asking for cars, insurance, or a hundred other



costly items. Not once did the Council raise a public ruckus over the poor purchasing policies used by the Commissioners. When the Legislature was in session last year, neither the Council nor the Commission sponsored a move to tighten the competitive bidding law.

At least some reforms in the City's purchasing habits are on the way, but whatever penalty is to be doled out for the disgraceful record of recent years appears to be strictly in the hands of the very people who have been taken to the cleaners: the voters.

This was a WJXT editorial.

TELEVISED FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9 1966/6:00 P.M. AND 11:00 P.M.

The word "waste" is such a prominent part of the very fabric of City government that recent disclosures about Jacksonville's travel expense policies were in no way surprising. Circuit Court Judge Marion Gooding included in his list of charges to the Grand Jury last May what he termed "the waste of public funds by certain officials of the City of Jacksonville by granting of 'overly free' travel expenses." His observation that some travel resembles paid vacations instead of business trips was an understatement.

There are few limits on what can be spent by City employees and officials on travel, and only meager accounting for what is spent. For meals and lodging there is no ceiling at all, and such feasts as a \$58 dinner for two employees are not uncommon. While transportation expense is limited to 10 cents per mile if a private car is used, it becomes in many cases more tantalizing to go by air or rail where first class passage is permitted. City Hall gossip long has extolled the delights of "champagne flights" hither and yon across the country.

But the icing on this very rich cake is what the City calls a "per diem" payment, which is doled out to travelers in addition to cash for transportation, meals, and lodging. This "per diem" can amount to \$12.50 per day, and its purpose, according to the City Auditor, is to provide pocket money for "tips, laundry, movies, and things." The state makes no such miscellaneous payment, nor does the federal government. As a WJXT Special Report noted this week, the lowest ranking Jacksonville employee can travel in a style not afforded even to the Governor of the state.

Most of the City's travel policy is rooted in the language of the City charter itself. But the law can be changed, and the fact that not a single member of the City Commission or the City Council has made an issue of the law indicates that the city family has been quite satisfied to bill the taxpayers for luxurious meals, lavish lodgings, and first-class travel.

Even in the best of times, the City's ultra-liberal travel program could not be justified. But today, when taxes within the City are imposing a hardship on many people, and when the City is hard-pressed for funds for

legitimate needs like a new police building and road maintenance, the outlays for travel are particularly inexcusable.

While the legislative delegation should amend the charter in 1967 to make travel reimbursement more realistic, the City itself can and should move on a number of fronts in the meantime to curb such extravagance.

This was a WJXT editorial.

TELEVISED WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1966/6:00 P.M.  
AND 11:00 P.M.

Among a number of things for which the City Commission has been noted in recent years is a distinct unwillingness to criticize or to penalize its members for violations of the City charter. The members of this closely knit club have tended to hid behind interpretations of the City Attorney when convenient, or to ignore the charter altogether. On one recent issue, for example, the Mayor unilaterally declared a provision of the charter unconstitutional, and that was that. On numerous occasions, provisions of the charter relating to purchasing have been violated, but the Commission has failed to have penalties in the charter invoked.

Against this backdrop, the question arises whether Commissioner Claude Smith has violated the conflict of interest section of the charter because of his affiliation with Southeastern Decorators, Inc., a firm which has been paid more than \$12,000 by the City over the past two years. In addition to his post on the Commission, Mr. Smith also serves the decorating company as legal counsel, and presumably is on its payroll.

It may or may not be a coincidence that Southeastern--since its incorporation two years ago--has received far more business from the City than any other decorating company, but there is little doubt that Southeastern has been favored by the City over other firms in being granted storage privileges in City facilities. It is relevant that Commissioner Smith has direct jurisdiction over the Auditorium and the Coliseum, where much of the decorating and exhibiting service has been rendered.

The charter forbids a City official from having any direct or indirect financial interest in any contract or job performed for the City. It provides that contracts or agreements in such cases shall be null and void, and under certain conditions defines the conflict as a misdemeanor punishable by a fine or jail term. The nub of the matter is whether the Commissioner has a direct or indirect financial interest in Southeastern. Although the Commissioner and the City Attorney argue that the charter provision does not apply, it is logical to presume that any fees paid to Commissioner Smith by Southeastern have come from revenues which consist in part of public funds paid by

the City of Jacksonville. If this does not constitute an "indirect interest" then the word "indirect" is meaningless.

If the Commission's behavior is true to form, this question will be ignored as others have in the past. It would appear that a final resolution depends on whether some citizen cares to take the issue to court.

Irrespective of the charter, it is not in the public interest for a member of the City Commission to be in the employ of a firm receiving City funds--particularly when those funds are not derived through competitive bidding. Mr. Smith's minimal responsibility to the public, it seems to us, is to sever his connection with one payroll or the other.

This was a WJXT editorial.

TELEVISED FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1966/6:00 P.M.  
AND 11:00 P.M.

With seeming indifference to the intense hurricane of citizen unrest which swirls around City Hall, the City Commission and City Council continue to be blind to the grave moral dilemma posed by the continued participation in the affairs of the City of officials charged with serious crimes.

Four of the nine members of the City Council--Mattox, Lowe, Cannon, and Sharp--have been indicted by the Grand Jury. Three of them have resigned their committee posts but otherwise have refused to suspend themselves from Council activity. Council President Lem Sharp, who still serves on the important budget committee, not only was indicted but refused to waive his immunity before the Grand Jury when asked to testify on matters relating to his official duties.

While all of these officers are entitled to a presumption of innocence of criminal activity until proven otherwise, the public is entitled to protection from the possibility of further exploitation in the event the charges are sustained in court. It is wrong that these four men should be casting votes on vital matters such as tax assessments, zoning, and budgets. In adamantly refusing to sideline themselves until the charges against them can be resolved, they are guilty of perverting the public trust to which they swore allegiance when they assumed office.

This moral breach deserves to be repudiated publicly, but except for Councilman Lavern Reynolds the City's leadership has publicly shut its eyes to the whole affair. The other members of the Council have balked at censuring their colleagues and urging their voluntary suspension. Councilman Burroughs, for example, pleads that "public embarrassment" of the indicted officials would result if he took part in a censure move, but the fact that the very integrity of City Government is at stake in the present situation overrides such a sentimental consideration. The acute embarrassment now shared by the entire community is infinitely grater.

Presumably on the basis that it, too, has no legal means to effect the suspension of the Councilmen, the City

Commission has failed to denounce in public the behavior of the reluctant Council members. But this is a moral question of great importance which transcends organizational lines and which calls out for public protest.

In its most recent report, the Grand Jury scored the "moral climate in this community which has tolerated most of the conditions which have been exposed." The results of last Tuesday's election and the continuing recall movement should be vivid evidence that the public has had its fill of equivocation and compromise with sound moral principles.

We again challenge the Council and the Commission to let themselves be heard loud and clear on this issue.

This was a WJXT editorial.

APPENDIX C  
SAMPLE OF THE EDITORIALS OF RALPH RENICK

"NO ENCOURAGEMENT FOR SWASTIKA CRACKPOTS"  
THURSDAY--JANUARY 7, 1960

The story of human history can be told in terms to conquer the forces of evil and degradation--the endless fight against such plagues of the human spirit as poverty, ignorance, slavery and hate.

Maybe someday, men will conquer these things and create a united world based on justice and human dignity. But in the meantime, human nature must go through a long period of development. We have to contend with all these things--including hate.

On Christmas Eve--two youths painted a swastika on the wall of a Jewish Synagogue in West Germany. An unimportant event in itself--it has given birth to a wave of anti-semitic incidents which has swept around the free world.

Last night, that wave of hate found its way to Florida. Swastika symbols, sign of the infamous Nazi movements of the war years, were found in Jacksonville, Tampa and Miami.

---

Note: Hundreds of editorials the editorials of Ralph Renick were examined for this project. All of the editorials written by Renick in the 1960s, as well as editorials from the late 1950s and the early 1970s were read.

Appendix C contains a sampling of the editorials by Ralph Renick on racial problems. There is an editorial in which Renick warned that "swastika crackpots" should be discouraged. There are several editorials warning of the danger of racial turmoil in Miami. There are editorials on racial problems in other cities. Finally, there is a tribute to H.V. Kaltenborn, who was Renick's mentor. The editorials are presented in chronological order.



Who committed these outrages is not known.

Most likely their identities will never be known, for people of this stripe are sneaks and cowards--they do their filthy deeds fitfully and under the protective cloak of darkness.

Governor Collins today reflected the sentiments of the people of this state when he called the incidents "despicable." But even this description does not do justice to the kind of demented hatred and twisted sickness which would desecrate houses of worship and smear the most contemptible hatred imaginable with a paintbrush. Law enforcement agencies should show no quarter in flushing out and bringing to justice those responsible. In these cases, it is the whole of society which is threatened and disgraced--not just one race or religion.

But there is something else to keep in mind. Most of these paint-wielding crackpots desire only one thing--publicity.

And while it is incumbent upon the newspapers and radio and television stations to keep the community informed of what is going on . . . it is also the duty of the media to see that these incidents are not overplayed--which merely further encourages an outbreak of further such incidents.

In November 1958, this community was plagued by bomb scares. At that time, it was stated in this editorial, quote, "In an effort to quell such outbreaks, WTVJ News will endeavor to report such incidents only when these occurrences result in such extreme action that they legitimately become newsworthy. We will not overplay these crackpot actions to give aid and comfort to the cowards responsible." Unquote.

The same thing applies today. We will not unduly become a party to these disgusting acts by giving these criminals what they want--public recognition.

"BI-RACIAL COMMITTEES CAN HELP PREVENT MOB WARFARE"  
TUESDAY--AUGUST 30, 1960

What has happened in Jacksonville the past few days demonstrates what can occur when the "hoodlum" element is allowed to run rampant.

In this case, Whites and Negroes have tangled in a violent display of mob warfare.

From reports we receive, the undesirable tough guys from each race moved themselves into combat.

Mob warfare of this kind is a matter for the police who are charged with maintaining law and order. Thus, the Jacksonville incidents are a reflection on the ability of the police to prevent and break up such things.

Further than that, the Jacksonville case is an outgrowth of a vacuum which has been created in that city. Sit-in demonstrations had been staged--tension arose--with the threat of violence. The possibility of disorder was present depending on how well the leadership of the community responded to the problem. In many southern cities, including Miami, the threat of violence was diminished when leaders made up their minds to face the problem realistically and in good faith.

Bi-racial committees have helped.

But in other cities, resistance was hardened by the sit-in demonstrations and moderate leadership was nowhere to be found. The vacuum thus created was filled by the mobs.

Mayor Burns of Jacksonville, despite the pleas of business interests and the City's Ministerial Alliance, persistently refuses to form a Bi-racial Committee. He says such committees, "invariably result in decisions to integrate."

The Mayor, in a way, is abdicating decision-making to angry mobs.

Unless the political and community leaders of any City open the way for communication between responsible members of both races, the problem will continue to simmer like a

volcano, ready to erupt in violence with little provocation.

"TRAGEDY IN THE STREETS OF NEW ORLEANS"  
THURSDAY--DECEMBER 1, 1960

If there is one great lesson to be learned from the civil tragedy now being played out in the streets of New Orleans and the Legislative halls of Baton Rouge, it is the value of moral leadership and what happens to a community when that leadership breaks down.

In a pitiful effort to stay the hand of the inevitable, the lawmakers and officials of Louisiana--with a few courageous exceptions--have led the people down the dead end path of school closing and mob rule.

Governor Jimmie Davis had tried to construct a wall between his state and the Federal Government based on 39 laws cemented together with the specious principle of "interposition." This wall came tumbling down with a crash yesterday with the Federal Court ruling said, "The conclusion is clear that interposition is not a Constitutional doctrine.

It's admittedly easy to criticize another State from a somewhat distant vantage point in Miami, but we feel particularly bad about the bitter seeds sown by demagogues in and out of the Louisiana Legislature which have spawned a bumper-crop of hate and violence. The following action, this week, by a group of mothers outside a New Orleans school points this up:

FILM-SOUND

WHITE MOTHERS  
& LITTLE  
CHILDREN--  
ONE WOMAN  
WITH REPORTER

AUDIO

"We don't want no niggers in our neighborhood. Why don't you move in a colored quarter? They got places for you." (CROWD JEERS--SHOUTS)

"Why should our children have to suffer for one little nigger? Now, you answer that. you answer that. One little nigger and 400 children's got to leave." (THEN A WOMAN HOLDING A LITTLE BOY IN HER ARMS TELLS BOY TO SAY, "Tell the man we don't want to integrate . . . tell him we don't want no niggers. . . ." (BOY SAYS NO).

It is generally accepted that mothers the world over--even in Louisiana--hold a responsibility to teach their young the ways of morality, justice and respect for law.

We feel the howling matriarchs of White supremacy in New Orleans hardly rate for any "Mother of the Year" awards.

They have not only shamed themselves before a world audience but there is no telling what scars they have left on the minds of their own children. such are the tragic results when the law is flouted and morality is abandoned to emotion.

"THE SCANDAL OF OUR SLUMS"  
THURSDAY--JANUARY 12/61

Tonight at 10:30--Channel Four will air a report on one of the most challenging problems faced by this community--"The Scandal of Our Slums."

Through years of political vacillation, weakness and corruption, the Central Negro District has evolved into a city of shacks and concrete tenements with a population of 40 thousand living in the mire of neglect which reflects upon every citizen of this area:

ROLL FILM (SIL)

AUDIO

SHACKS & ALLEY

This special FYI report will take you across the tracks and depict the life and sounds of the 284 acres crammed with young and old. You'll see the plight of the youngsters--the deplorable sanitation--and the hopes of the future. Newsman Ira Eisenberg talked to one teenager:

SOF:

(EISENBERG) What kind of problems do teenagers in this area have? What activities do you have?  
(GIRL) Well, that seems to be our only problem. We don't have any activities for them--after school activities, that is. When we come home and get cleaned up, we don't have any place to go unless you go downtown to the library. And then they complain about teenagers in the nightclubs and that's the only kind of activities we have--the night clubs.

(END SOUND)

Miami must make a massive assault on the problem armed with weapons adequate to the task.

Any area of any city would look and smell like a slum if zoning abuses were allowed--laws not enforced--garbage and trash allowed to accumulate--public recreational facilities neglected and the area left to drift by itself.

So, it is not easy to write off the problem by saying, "It's only colored town."

Next week the City of Miami begins public hearings on a new zoning law--the first based on sound planning and recognition of future needs.

The Apartment Owners Association is strongly opposed to the new plan which would help future construction in the Negro district. To us, this testifies to the potential effectiveness of the needed changes.

January 30<sup>th</sup>, the City Commission will consider adoption of a Minimum Housing Code setting standards for occupancy of any unit.

The revised zoning law and minimum housing statute are both steps in the right direction.

This community, to be progressive, cannot tolerate the slums.

A further report on this station tonight at 10:30.

No. 1402

Tuesday, February 25/64

"RACIAL DANGER SIGNS APPEAR IN MIAMI"

Nine months ago the Metro Commission named 18 persons to its newly created Community Relations Board. The Board was to work in the field of maintaining good human relations between all human segments of the county--all races, creeds and colors.

The Board has made a good start at defining the problems and in meeting certain emergency situation.

But we were interested in the farewell remarks to the Board by its interim Executive Director Seymour Samet who, on February 15<sup>th</sup>, returned to his full-time post as Florida Director of the American Jewish Committee. Mr. Samet outlined some of his concerns:

He said that: "Miami, long noted for its superficial attendance to the major problems of our times, has muddled through on economic planning, urban growth and social welfare."

He pointed up some danger signs of possible upcoming trouble.

Plans are being considered for sit-in demonstrations at one of Dade's major industries. Block-busting realtors are already at work selling homes to Negroes in previously all-White neighborhoods. Home builders and civic associations are planning resistance tactics.

Only a small percentage of this community's Negro children attend integrated schools--this may lead to greater pressures from the Negro community to accelerate the pace of integration.

Negro groups are also getting restless to the "tokenism" exhibited in employment opportunity and public accommodation in hotels and restaurants.

Mr. Samet mentions one other potential trouble area:



He says despite the contributions made by Cuban refugees, antagonism toward them continues--they are becoming the scapegoats of our many ills.

Mr. Samet's farewell address to the Community Relations Board was a frank, honest and fearless evaluation of what might happen here--that we are enmeshed in a revolution--not an evolution.

The Board has a difficult task ahead, but the job can be made easier by the understanding and support of the community at large.

No. 1420  
Tuesday, March 24/64

"JACKSONVILLE RACE RIOTS GIVES FLORIDA BLACK-EYE"

Florida's progress in the field of race relations is being given a "black eye" by developments in the past 24 hours in the state's second largest city--Jacksonville. Once before, in 1960 Jacksonville was the scene of flare-ups over racial picketing and sit-ins. Organized bands of young Negroes roamed the streets four years ago, striking at one place, disappearing and striking blocks away.

The demonstrations ended with the appointment of a bi-racial committee which managed to bring about some improvements for the city's Negroes--integration of many public buildings such as the City Auditorium, Sports Coliseum and 'Gator Bowl. But the city swimming pools were closed and a city park turned to other uses rather than submit to integration.

Jacksonville and its elected officials have been anything but enthusiastic over recognizing the need for any improvement in the field of race relations.

Finally, the bi-racial committee, frustrated in its efforts to achieve meaningful communication between city officials and the Negro community disbanded a month ago.

Meanwhile, the Ku Klux Klan has remained active--holding weekly meetings; the home of a Negro child attending an all-white school was dynamited.

The Negroes of Jacksonville decided to conduct these latest demonstrations after the Mayor of that City Haydon Burns announced on a Sunday TV show that he was deputizing 496 firemen as special police to hold the Negroes in check.

This raised to nearly 1,000 the number of officers available to hold the line.

Florida has made some progress in race relations. But in Miami lines of communication have remained open between Negro and White leadership. Miami has had no violence--Miami is moving peacefully ahead at the moment--the Negro's main complaint is the slowness of the pace.

But in Jacksonville, the Negro has been told, in effect, "Stay in your place." And a thousand police and firemen are there to make sure they do. But, as the past 24 hours have shown, it won't work. Unfortunately, Jacksonville city officials refuse to recognize that the entire state of Florida must suffer as a result.

No. 1473

Friday, June 29/64

"FLORIDA'S OLDEST CITY BUCKING OLDEST PROBLEM"

The oldest city in America has one of the oldest problems in America--racial turmoil.

But not only St. Augustine is in the glare of national attention. What happens in St. Augustine is reflective on the entire State of Florida.

We know of many people who have cancelled plans to visit the New York World's Fair after learning of muggings on the streets and subways and violence in the New York area. Thus, the overall image of New York has affected people's travel plans.

St. Augustine is similarly interpreted by Americans as somehow indicative of what is going on in Florida. Miami and other sections have had an enlightened attitude toward improving race relations. Despite this, however, these cities may very well suffer because of the troubles in one city 300 miles up the coast.

The unfortunate part of St. Augustine's problem is the reluctance to reach any sort of compromise. Martin Luther King and his demonstrators have adamantly continued their publicity-inspired efforts to put the spotlight on St. Augustine. King's success has been due to the unbending attitude of the city's leadership to communicate with the Negro community.

A crack in the dike appeared earlier in the week when the Grand Jury of St. John's County recommended a 30-day cooling off period, after which a bi-racial committee would be set up. King today came back with a counter-peace proposal to call off demonstrations for one week if the Grand Jury, which went into recess yesterday, would reconvene and put to work immediately a bi-racial committee.

The Jury foreman responded by saying the Jury would not be intimidated nor would it negotiate nor would it change its mind.

Responsibility would appear to be the key word in the dispute.

The lack of leadership in the past has provoked the present crisis which can only be solved by an awakened leadership which recognizes the rights of all--black and white.

No. 1536  
Monday, November 9/64

"JACKSONVILLE SCHOOL CRISIS AFFECTS STATE"

Jacksonville tonight stands on the brink of a major crisis in its schools.

A powerful Florida committee of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools will recommend at the Association's November 30<sup>th</sup> Louisville convention that the 15 public high schools in Duval County be discredited.

This should chill the heart of every citizen of Duval and Jacksonville--whether he be a parent or not.

The Florida Committee wants the Duval high schools dropped from the accreditation list because of "inadequate administrative facilities and poor financial support."

This is a drastic measure. The Southern Association follows its branch committee's recommendations 99 per cent of the time.

Dropping the Jacksonville high schools from the accredited list makes them practically useless--graduates are not recognized anywhere in the country--the diplomas are not accepted by colleges and universities.

WFGA-TV, WOMETCO's sister station in Jacksonville, reports tonight that the U.S. Navy has hinted it may pull its facilities out of the community if the schools are rendered useless with the loss of accreditation.

The Jacksonville School System had been warned a year ago that it faced such a loss unless improvements were made.

The community apparently sat on its hands and did nothing.

It's ironic that all of this comes about on the first day of American Education Week.

We in Dade County, with the nation's seventh largest school system, should take a moment to reflect on what we have and its importance.

With a budget of 126-million dollars a year, the school system is the single biggest user of tax money. Over 200,000 students are enrolled from kindergarten to junior college. But a good school system just doesn't happen. It takes public interest, hard work and planning. And the people of the community are the ones that make it work or not.

The thoughts of a child coming out with a diploma that is not accepted in most colleges is a thought too distressing to dismiss.

Our school system is only as good as we want it to be.

No. 1668  
Tuesday, June 15/65

"BROADCASTING LOSES A PIONEER"

There was a time in this country--as a matter of fact --around the entire world, when the voice was all powerful.

Before the days of television, roughly from 1920 to 1950, radio was supreme master of the airwaves and a hundred different voices range out--some good--some bad. These were the days of strong opinions, of vocal vibrancy, of personalities that spoke their minds and didn't care whether people agreed with them or not.

It was a stimulating era of thought development. Some think it was broadcasting's finest hour.

One of the men largely responsible for pioneering free expression on radio was H. V. Kaltenborn.

The Dean of Commentators died yesterday at the age of 86. He had just returned to his New York home Saturday from his Palm Beach winter residence.

Mr. Kaltenborn's death leaves a void in the ranks of those few men in broadcast opinionating who have achieved an emeritus ranking.

Ed Murrow as another. He, too, has left us.

If I may be permitted a personal note--it was Mr. Kaltenborn who was directly responsible for my entrance into the broadcast news profession. The year was 1949. Mr. Kaltenborn established a Foundation to enable graduating college students to undertake a research investigation in the communications field. The Kaltenborn Foundation awarded me its first Fellowship and I came from the University of Miami to WTVJ--Florida's first TV station--to pursue my investigation of TV news.

In the years since, Mr. Kaltenborn has been a steady supporter, as well as a constructive critic, of my efforts in broadcasting.



He was an inspiration to all of us latter day toilers in the vineyard he planted back in 1924. To his very end, H. M. Kaltenborn, even at the age of 86, kept a keen interest in all things. His deep interest in professional quality in radio and TV news never diminished.

His final broadcast words were recorded just three weeks ago. On May 26<sup>th</sup>, he visited the campus of Florida Atlantic University at Boca Raton. His interview comments were video-tape recorded. Here is a portion of the final public words of H. V. Kaltenborn talking about today's radio-TV news:

VIDEOTAPE

H.V. KALTENBORN:

AUDIO

"There's too much commercialism. We need to utilize everything associated with radio a more constructive way; in a way that makes for education; that makes for learning; that makes for knowledge rather than in a way that makes for commercialism. We have let ourselves go on commercialism to too large an extent."

H.V. Kaltenborn's integrity and search for knowledge and the truth leaves a heritage for all of us to carry on.

We will miss him.

No. 1686  
Monday, July 12/65

"RACIAL DISHARMONY STIRRED AT NEW SCHOOL SITE"

We in Dade County like to boast that we have had no serious racial disturbances. What we perhaps forget is that this has come about not through any miracle, but through sound, reasoned work by a great many people.

This is demonstrated at the moment by the intelligent and forward thinking of the Community Relations Board which has offered a solution to the Richmond Heights school construction hassle.

The situation brings into focus the term: De facto segregation.

This simply means that segregation is in existence because of the residential patterns of certain areas. If a given area is nearly all Negro, you end up--although unintentionally--with a segregated school. While one can maintain that this is nothing more than reflecting existing residential patterns, the larger point is that through the schools isolated segregation can be brought to an end in the years ahead.

Observe any first grader in today's world. He neither cares nor is overtly aware that his seatmate is black or white.

If this attitude is adopted in the first grade, his generation is well on the way to avoiding all the racial misery the nation is going through.

In the Richmond Heights controversy, the Negroes do not want just another new school that will continue the pattern they seek to break out of.

The Community Relations Board has proposed that two moderate-sized schools be built to serve both Richmond Heights and Colonial Heights.

In these two areas, there are 1,058 school children--700 Negro and 358 White.

By building two smaller schools; one in a predominantly White area and one in a predominantly Negro area, access will be afforded children of both races to intermingle.

And the CRB also recommends that any parent not wanting his children to attend either school will have the option of transporting them to other schools.

Dade is faced with a true test of maturity and progress.

We have a good record of racial harmony but this only counts if we keep our record intact when the problems get big.

## REFERENCES

### Advertisements

Brechner, Joe, "Until We Meet Again," Advertisement placed by Brechner in the *Orlando Sentinel*, informing viewers that he was being forced to turn over control of the station to another group while hearings were being conducted by the Federal Communications Commission to determine which of five groups would be awarded the operating license for WFTV-TV. *Orlando Sentinel*, March 1969.

### Books

Aristotle. 1987. *Nichomachean ethics*. Translated by D. Ross. Oxford: Oxford Press.

Bacon, Eve. 1977. *Orlando, a centennial history*. Chulota, FL: The Mickler House.

Bagdikian, Ben. 1992. *The media monopoly*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Beacon Press.

Barnouw, Erik. 1968. *The golden web*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Benhabib, Seyla. 1992. *Situating the self*. New York: Routledge.

Black, Jay, ed. 1997. *Mixed news: The Public/civic/communitarianism debate*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Black, J., Steele, B., and Barney, R. 1995. *Doing ethics in journalism*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Button, James W. 1989. *Blacks and social change: Impact of the Civil Rights Movement in southern communities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Cagin, Seth, and Philip, Dray. 1988. *We are not Afraid*. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company.
- Chalmers, David M. 1965. *Hooded Americanism, the history of the Ku Klux Klan*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books.
- Colburn, David. 1985. *Racial change and community crisis: St. Augustine, Florida, 1877-1980*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Colburn, David R., and Landers, Jane L., eds. 1995. *The African American heritage of Florida*. Gainesville: The University Press of Florida.
- Commission on Freedom of the Press. 1947. *A free and responsible press: A general report on mass communication: Newspapers, radio, motion Pictures, magazines, and books*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Fallows, James. 1996. *Breaking the news*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Gannon, Michael. 1993. *Florida: A short history*. Gainesville, University Press of Florida.
- Garrow, David J., ed. 1989. *St. Augustine, Florida, 1963-1964: Mass protest and racial violence*. Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing.
- Gitlin, Todd. 1993. *The sixties: Years of hope, days of rage*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Greenwood, Val D. 1990. *The researcher's guide to American genealogy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing.
- Habermas, Jurgen. 1993. *Justification and application*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1990. *Moral consciousness and communicative action*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1992. *The structural transformation of the public sphere*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

- Hilliard, Robert L., and Keith, Michael C. 1992. *The broadcast century*. Boston: Focal Press.
- Himmelfarb, G. 1995. *The Demoralization of society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values*. New York: A.A. Knopf.
- Hughes, Frank. 1950. *Prejudice and the press*. New York: The Devin-Adair Company.
- Huie, William Bradford. 1968. *Three lives for Mississippi*. New York: Signet Books.
- Hulteng, John L. 1973. *The opinion function*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Klinkowitz, Jerome. 1980. *The American 1960s, imaginative acts in a decade of change*. Ames: The Iowa State University Press.
- Kohlberg, Lawrence. 1981. *The philosophy of moral development*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.
- Lambeth, Edmund B., Mayer, Philip E., and Thorsen, Esther. 1998. *Assessing public journalism*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.
- Lerner, Gerda. 1979. *The Majority finds its past*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Lichty, Lawrence W., and Topping, Malachi C. 1975. *American broadcasting: A source book on the history of radio and television*. New York: Hastings House.
- Locke, John. 1960. *Two treatises of government*. Edited by Peter Laslett. Cambridge, England: University Press.
- Manchester, William Raymond. 1974. *The glory and the dream: A narrative history of America*. Boston: Brown, Little.
- Marcus, Robert D. 1945. *A brief history of the United States since 1945*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Martin, Richard A. 1968. *Consolidation: Jacksonville, Duval County*. Jacksonville: Convention Press, Inc.

- \_\_\_\_\_. 1971. *The city makers*. Jacksonville: Convention Press, Inc.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1993. *A quiet revolution*. Jacksonville: White Publishing Co.
- Merritt, Davis. 1998. *Public journalism and public life*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Messick, Hank. 1968. *Syndicate in the sun*. New York: McMillan.
- Miller, William Robert. 1968. *Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York: Avon Books.
- Morgan, M.L., ed. 1992. *Classics of moral and political theory*. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hacket Publishing Company.
- Murray, Michael D., ed. 1999. *Encyclopedia of television news*. Phoenix: The Oryx Press.
- Nevins, Allan. 1995. *Allan Nevins on history*. Edited by Ray Allen Billington. New York: Scribner.
- Price, Steven D., ed. 1973. *Civil rights, 1967-68*. New York: Facts on File, Inc.
- Rawls, John. 1971. *A Theory of justice*. Cambridge, MA, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Rivers, William L., Peterson, Theodore, and Hansen, Jay W. 1971. *The mass media and modern society*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Routt, Ed. 1974. *Dimensions of broadcast editorializing*. Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Tab Books.
- Sandman, Peter M., Rubin, David M., and Sachsman, David B. 1972. *Media, an introductory analysis of American mass communications*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Shafer, Robert Jones. 1980. *A Guide to historical method*. Homewood, IL: The Dorsey Press.

- Simmons, Steven J. 1978. *The fairness doctrine and the media*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sloan, Wm. David, and Stovall, James G., eds. 1989. *The media in America*. Worthington, OH: Publishing Horizons, Inc.
- Sobel, Lester A., ed. 1967. *Civil rights 1960-66*. New York: Facts on File, Inc.
- Startt, James D., and Sloan, William D. 1989. *Historical methods in mass communication*. Hillsdale, NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Stone, J., and Mennell, S., eds. 1980. *Alexis de Tocqueville on Democracy, revolution, and society: Selected writings*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tocqueville, Alexis de. 1966. *Democracy in America*. Translated by George Lawrence, J.P. Mayer, and Max Lerner, eds. New York: Harper and Row.
- Wagman, Jules L. 1988. *Jacksonville and Florida's first coast*. Northridge, CA.: Windsor Publications, Inc.
- Waldrop, A. Gayle. 1948. *Editor and editorial writer*. New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc.
- Weisbrot, Robert. 1991. *Freedom bound: A history of America's Civil Rights Movement*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Wood, William A. 1967. *Electronic journalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

### Book Articles

- Benhabib, Seyla. 1990. Afterword: Communicative ethics and contemporary controversies in practical philosophy. In *The communicative ethics controversy*, ed. S. Benhabib and F. Dallmayr, 330-369. Cambridge: MIT Press.



- Carey, James. 1995. The press, public opinion, and public discourse. In *Public opinion and the communication of consent*, eds. T.L. Glasser and C.T. Salmon, 374-402. New York: Guilford Press.
- Colburn, David R. 1982. The Saint Augustine business community. In *Southern businessmen and desegregation*, eds. Elizabeth Jacoway and David Colburn, 211-235. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- Dunn, Marvin. 1991. Death watch. In *Eyes on the prize*, eds. Clayborne Carson and others, 666-681. New York: Penguin Books.
- Hartley, Robert W. 1989. Don't tread on grandmother Peabody. In *St. Augustine, Fl., 1963-1964*, ed. David J. Garrow, 27-39. Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, Inc.
- Hemingway, Theodore. 1989. The rise of black student consciousness in Tallahassee and the State of Florida. In *The Civil Rights Movement in Florida and the United States*, ed. Charles U. Smith, 61-85. Tallahassee: Father and Son Publishing, Inc.
- Jones, Maxine D. 1996. The African-American experience in Twentieth-Century Florida. In *The new history of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon, 373-390. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.
- Lawson, Steven F. 1982. From sit-in to race riot. In *Southern businessmen and desegregation*, eds. Elizabeth Jacoway and David Colburn, 257-281. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- Matera, Fran. 1997. WTVJ, Miami: Wolfson, Renick, and may the good news be yours. In *Television in America*, eds. Michael D. Murray and Donald G. Godfrey, 106-127. Ames: Iowa State University Press.
- Mohl, Raymond A., and Pozzetta, George E. 1996. From migration to multiculturalism: A history of Florida immigration. In *The new history of Florida*, ed. Michael Gannon, 391-417. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Perry, Linda. 1997. A TV pioneer's crusade for civil rights in the segregated south: WFTV, Orlando, Florida. In *Television in America: Local station history from across the nation*, eds. Michael D. Murray and Donald G. Godfrey, 128-154. Ames: Iowa State University Press.

Rosen, Jay. 1994. Public journalism: First principles. In *Public journalism: Theory and practice*, eds. Jay Rosen & Davis Merritt, 6-18. Dayton: Kettering Foundation.

### Conference Papers

Bender, James R., and Berens, Charlyne. 1998. Public journalism's incubator: Identifying preconditions for support. Presented at *Public journalism: A critical forum*, at the University of South Carolina, 11-13 October 1998.

Bowers, James R., Caflin, Blair, and Walker, Gary. 1998. The impact of civic journalism on voting behavior in state-wide referendums: A case study from Rochester, New York. Presented at the 1998 annual meeting of the New England political science association. Available at the web site of the Pew Center for Civic Journalism, [http://www.pewcenter.org/doingcj.research/r\\_does.html](http://www.pewcenter.org/doingcj.research/r_does.html)

Englehardt, James. 1998. Public journalism, objectivity and public life. Presented at *Public journalism: A critical forum*, at the University of South Carolina, 11-13 October 1998.

Glover, Joe. 1998. Joe Brechner's strategy for Orlando, Florida: The 1960s civil rights editorials of WFTV-TV. Presented at 1998 *American Journalism Historians Association Annual Conference*, Louisville, KY, 22 October 1998.

Haas, Tanni. 1998. Towards a democratically viable conception of publicness: The case of public journalism. Presented at *Public Journalism: A Critical Forum*, conference at the University of South Carolina, 11-13 October 1998.

Maier, Scott, and Potter, Deborah. 1998. Public journalism through the television lens: How did the broadcast media perform in campaign '96'? Presented at *Public Journalism: A Critical Forum*, conference at the University of South Carolina, 11-13 October 1998.

Novek, Eleanor M. 1998. In the public interest?--NOT! Young people assess the social responsibility of the press in civic journalism. Presented at *Public Journalism: A Critical Forum*, conference at the University of South Carolina, 11-13 October 1998.

Perry, David K. 1998. Civic Journalism, nominalism and realism. Presented at *Public Journalism: A Critical Forum*, conference at the University of South Carolina, 11-13 October 1998.

Richter, Denise Barkis. 1998. Local television news and viewer empowerment: TV journalism's role in empowering an informed and active public. Presented at *Public Journalism: A Critical Forum*, conference at the University of South Carolina, 11-13 October 1998.

#### Correspondence

Brechner, Joe, to Paul Dobin of Cohn and Marks, Washington, DC, 3 January 1974.

Chiles, Lawton M., Jr., State Representative, to Bill Grove, 26 September 1966.

Gaillard, John to WJXT, 1 July 1960.

Haines, Daniel Hamilton (Brechner's writing professor at Wayne State University), to Joe Brechner, 27 January 1935.

#### Dissertations and Theses

Ashdown, Paul. 1975. Television and the editorial crusade: A case study of WTVJ-TV, 1965-1973. Ph.D. diss., Bowling Green State University.

- Burney, Ruben, II. 1991. Newspaper coverage of the early 1960's Civil Rights Movement: A content analysis of world views. Master's thesis, Michigan State University
- Compton, James Robert. 1966. Communicative politics and public journalism. Master's thesis, Simon Fraser University.
- Cusack, Mary Ann. 1960. Editorializing in broadcasting. Ph.D. diss., Wayne State University.
- Flannery, Gerald Vincent. 1966. Local television editorializing: A case study of the editorials of Ralph Renick on WTVJ-TV. Ph.D. diss., Ohio University.
- Kraeplin, Camille Renee. 1998. The role of the editorial page in newspaper-based public journalism. Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin.
- Payne, Rebecca A. 1998. Connecting in Columbia, South Carolina: A case study in public journalism. Ph.D. diss., University of South Carolina.
- Turner, Delaney Lyle. 1998. From Classes to Masses: A Comparative Study of the Penny Press and Public Journalism. Master's Thesis, University of Western Ontario.

### Editorials

- Brechner, Joe. The failure of the rabble rousers. WLOF-TV editorial. 7 September 1961.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Letters to the editorials. WLOF-TV editorial. 13 September 1961.
- \_\_\_\_\_. How dangerous are crackpots? WFTV-TV editorial. 11 May 1962.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Race relations improve. WFTV-TV editorial. 6 June 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The shame of Jackson. WFTV-TV editorial. 1 July 1963.

- \_\_\_\_\_. A Klan warning. WFTV-TV editorial. 15 July 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Progress in race relations. WFTV-TV editorial. 30 July 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Does desegregation hurt business. WFTV-TV editorial. 9 August 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Birmingham tragedy. WFTV-TV editorial. 16 September 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Partial civil rights. WFTV-TV editorial. 11 October 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Rabble in Marion. WFTV-TV editorial. 24 October 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. DuPont Foundation award. WFTV editorial. 22 March 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Klan investigation. WFTV-TV editorial. 2 April 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Society of bigots. WFTV-TV editorial. 11 May 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Freedom's enemies at home. WFTV-TV editorial. 14 October 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Justice and changing attitudes. WFTV-TV editorial. 8 December 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. How to prevent racial unrest. WFTV-TV editorial. 25 July 1966.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Violence and civil rights. WFTV-TV editorial. 26 July 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Who represents the minority? WFTV-TV editorial. 28 July 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Outstanding football game. WFTV-TV editorial. 18 September 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Renewed menace. WFTV-TV editorial. 17 October 1967.

\_\_\_\_\_. Clear and present danger. WFTV-TV editorial. 17 November 1967.

\_\_\_\_\_. A sense of outrage. WFTV-TV editorial. 8 April 1968.

\_\_\_\_\_. Equal justice and protection. WFTV-TV editorial. 25 April 1968.

Davis, Norm, WJXT Editorial, 10 September 1962.

\_\_\_\_\_. WJXT Editorial, 15 November 1962.

\_\_\_\_\_. WJXT Editorial, 19 June 1963.

\_\_\_\_\_. WJXT Editorial, 27 September 1963.

\_\_\_\_\_. WJXT Editorial, 3 October 1963.

\_\_\_\_\_. WJXT Editorial, 4 March 1964.

\_\_\_\_\_. WJXT Editorial, 28 May 1964.

\_\_\_\_\_. WJXT Editorial, 18 March 1965.

\_\_\_\_\_. WJXT Editorial, 9 April 1965.

\_\_\_\_\_. WJXT Editorial, 16 April 1965.

\_\_\_\_\_. WJXT Editorial, 22 April 1965.

\_\_\_\_\_. WJXT Editorial, 29 April 1965.

\_\_\_\_\_. WJXT Editorial, 6 May 1965.

\_\_\_\_\_. WJXT Editorial 11 March 1966.

\_\_\_\_\_. WJXT Editorial, 25 March 1966.

\_\_\_\_\_. WJXT Editorial, 11 April 1966.

\_\_\_\_\_. WJXT Editorial, 18 May 1966.

\_\_\_\_\_. WJXT Editorial, 15 August 1966.

Renick, Ralph. No encouragement for swastika crackpots. 7 January 1960.

\_\_\_\_\_. Striptease ordinance stripped. 20 January 1960.

\_\_\_\_\_. Honky tonk crackdown continues. 29 January 1960.

\_\_\_\_\_. B-Girl joints like 'charge-it' business. 5 February 1960.

\_\_\_\_\_. Police Chief Headley comments on honky-tonk cleanup campaign. 9 February 1960.

\_\_\_\_\_. The heat's really on for strip-joint owners. 11 March 1960.

\_\_\_\_\_. Honky tonk crackdown continues. 22 July 1960.

\_\_\_\_\_. Bi-racial committees can help prevent mob warfare. 30 August 1960.

\_\_\_\_\_. Louisiana, not another Little Rock, 14 November 1960.

\_\_\_\_\_. Tragedy in the streets of New Orleans. 1 December 1960.

\_\_\_\_\_. The television editorial. 21 June 1963.

\_\_\_\_\_. Racial danger signs appear in Miami. 25 February 1964.

\_\_\_\_\_. Jacksonville race riots give Florida black-eye. 24 March 1964.

\_\_\_\_\_. A lesson to be learned from Jacksonville. 25 March 1964.

\_\_\_\_\_. Racial harmony Is everyone's business. 7 May 1964.

\_\_\_\_\_. Voting in Florida should not be a black and white issue. 29 May 1964.

\_\_\_\_\_. Florida's Oldest City Bucking Oldest Problem. 19 June 1964.

- \_\_\_\_\_. St. Augustine casting shadow on entire state. 29 June 1964.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Broadcasting loses a pioneer. 15 June 1965
- \_\_\_\_\_. Civil rights Is everybody's job. 2 July 1964.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Capital punishment in Florida. 2 February 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The message finally gets through. 9 May 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. A hard look at Miami riot control. 12 August 1968.
- \_\_\_\_\_. A time for facts, not rumors. 28 July 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Act now or surrender. 13 September 1966.
- \_\_\_\_\_. An unfortunate misunderstanding. 8 June 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Beyond the Kitchen Door. 6 April 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. It finally happened here. 8 August 1968.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Keeping the racial balance in Miami schools. 18 April 1968.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Let's keep Miami cool this summer. 16 June 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Miami is not like Selma. 12 July 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Racial disharmony stirred at new school site. 13 July 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Violence sometimes teaches a lesson. 16 August 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The price of corruption. 6 September 1966.
- \_\_\_\_\_. What are you saying, Chief McNutt? 17 November 1966.
- \_\_\_\_\_. What is the hoax? 16 February 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The violent end of a man of peace. 5 April 1968.



- \_\_\_\_\_. Squelching the spread of racial rumors. 16 May 1968.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Southern heritage: Living on without *Dixie*. 27 September 1968.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Tough talk for a tough situation. 24 October 1968.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The reason why. 28 March 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Viewers speak on Channel Four's restaurant series. 12 April 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. There ought to be a law. 16 April 1973.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The restaurant men who can't stand the heat-- should stay in their kitchens. 16 May 1973.

#### Government Documents

- U.S. Federal Communications Commission. 1941. *The Yankee Network* (WAAB), Docket 5618 and 5640, 16 January.
- U.S. Federal Communications Commission, *Broadcast Actions of the Federal Communications Commission* Washington, DC., Report No. 3207, Public Notice B, 60209, 19 June.

#### Interviews

- Bissell, Windsor. 1997. Interview by author, October 10, Jacksonville Beach. Tape recording.
- Brechner, Marion. 1998. Interview by author, 22 April, Winter Park, Florida. Tape recording.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1998. Interview by author, 9 March, Winter Park. Tape recording.
- Davis, Norm. 1997. Interview by author, 6 October, Miami. Tape recording.
- Dean, Walter. 2000. Telephone conversation with author, 1 May. Hand-written notes.

Fuqua-Cardwell, Kathy Amick. 1998. Interview by author, 20 February, Orlando. Tape recording.

Garrard, Patricia, Renick's sister. 2000. Interview by author, 12 March, North Miami. Tape Recording.

Martin, Richard. 1997. Interview by author, 15 October, Jacksonville. Tape recording.

Pinder, Father Nelson. 1998. Interview by author, 9 March, Orlando. Tape recording.

Renick, Ralph, Jr.. 2000. Interview by author, 12 March, Miami. Tape recording.

Renick, Richard, Ralph's brother. 2000. Interview by author, 11 March, Miami. Tape recording.

Ruester, Ray. 1998. Telephone interview by author, 26 February. Tape recording.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1998. Telephone interview by author, 23 April. Tape recording.

Spiedell, Rosalie, Ralph Renick's mother. 2000. Interview by author, 11 March, Miami.

Tanzler, Hans former Jacksonville mayor. 1997. Telephone interview by author, 7 November. Tape recording.

Thomas, John. 1997. Interview by author, 8 November, Tallahassee. Tape recording.

### Journal Articles

Alexander, S.L. 1992. May the good news be yours: Ralph Renick and Florida's first news. *Mass Comm Review* (Winter-Spring, v19, n1-2): 57-63.

Altschull, J.H. 1996. A crisis of conscience: Is community journalism the answer? *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, (11-3): 166-172.

- Anderson, R., Dardenne, R., and Killenberg, G.M. 1996. The American newspaper as the public conversational commons. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, (11,3): 159-165.
- Barney, Ralph. 1996. Community journalism: Good intentions, questionable practice. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, (11, 3): 140-151.
- Barrett, Edward W. 1966. Once opposed, Columbia dean okays editorials. *RTNDA Bulletin*, September.
- Carey, James. 1985. The problem of journalism history. *Journalism History*: 3.
- Corrigan, Don. 1997. Racial pledges, gang summits, election forums--What actually makes a public journalism project? *St. Louis Journalism Review*: (27, March), 1.
- Einstein, Paul. 1967. Camera on corruption. *The Quill*, (May) 12.
- Glasser, T.L., and Craft, S. 1996. Public journalism and the prospects for press accountability. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, (11,3): 152-158.
- Hartung, B. 1981. Attitudes toward the applicability of the Hutchins report on press responsibility. *Journalism Quarterly*: 58 (3)(Fall): 428-433.
- Hodges, L. 1996. Ruminations about the communitarian debate. *Journal of Mass media Ethics*, (11, 3): 133-139.
- Holmes, Robert. 1957. The broadcasters' duty to editorialize. *Journal of Broadcasting* (Spring): 141.
- McIntyre, J. S. 1979. The Hutchins Commission's search for a moral framework. *Journalism History* 6,2, (Summer): 56.
- McIntyre, J. S. 1987. Repositioning a landmark: The Hutchins Commission and freedom of the press. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* (4): 136-160.

- McMillin, John E. 1964. Voices in a new democracy. *Television Quarterly* (Summer, Vol. III, No. 3): 27.
- Merritt, Davis, Jr., and McMasters, Paul. 1996. Merritt and McMasters debate public journalism. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* (11,3, 1996): 171-183.
- Mitchell, Catherine C. 1990. The place of biography in the history of women. *American Journalism*, vol. 7, no. 1, (Winter): 23-38.
- Unsigned. 1958. The editorial: TV finds its voice. *Television Quarterly* (Winter,): 21.
- Unsigned. 1985. Radio-TV newsmen prod themselves. *Editor and Publisher*. (25 October): 65.
- Willey, Susan. 1998. Civic journalism in practice: Case studies in the art of listening. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 19 (Winter): 16.

### Lectures

- Tripp, Bernell. 1998. Class lecture in Biography as History, 26 August, University of Florida.
- Winn, Billy. Lecture in Problems and Ethics in Journalism, University of Florida, Spring 1996.

### Magazine Articles

- Hornerger, Michael. 1966. How TV can move a city into action. *Television Magazine* (October): 43.
- Miami's restaurants were bugged until we blew the whistle. 1973. *Broadcasting* (20 August): 42.
- Shepard, Alicia. 1996. The Pew connection. *American Journalism Review* (April): 24.
- Television raises its voice. 1958. *TV Guide*, (23 April): 5.

### Miscellaneous

National Association of Broadcasters. 1959. Editorializing on the air.

Renick, Ralph. 1959. Statement to the FCC, Washington, D.C. (Docket number 12782, 15 December).

WTVJ-TV. 1958. *The Television Editorial* (March).

### Monographs

Blanchard, M.A. 1997. The Hutchins Commission, the press and the responsibility concept. *Journalism Monographs* (May): 11.

Danna, Sammy R. 1965. Broadcast editorializing. *Freedom of Information Center Publication No. 141*, School of Journalism, University of Missouri.

### Newspaper Articles

AP. 1967. Reds down five copters near Saigon. *Florida Times-Union*, 8 August, A-1.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1967. Negroes stage Capitol protest. *Florida Times-Union*, 8 August, A-1.

As Negro houses burned at Ocoee great mass of ammunition is exploded. 1920. *Orlando Morning Sentinel*, 4 November, 1.

Block, Alex Ben. 1973. Taking notice. *Miami News*, 13 April, 15.

Buchanan, Jim. 1968. 14 Negro students arrested after UM demonstration. *Miami Herald*, 15 May, 1A.

Crosby, John. 1958. TV finally dares editorials on news. *Detroit Free Press*, 10 March, cited in Cusack, 201.

\_\_\_\_\_. 1958. TV stations with opinions. *New York Herald Tribune*, 9 March, Sec.4, 1.

Crouse, Richard. 1966. Commission played on city insurance; Jurors condemn actions. *Times-Union*, 1 July, A-1.

- Disneyworld to aid area. 1967. *Florida Times-Union*, 1 August, B-1.
- Dr. King's plea moves seventeen Rabbis to join St. Augustine protest. 1964. *The New York Times*, 5 June, 18.
- Eiland, Darrell. 1973. Restaurant business slumps. *Miami Herald*, 15 May, 2B.
- Era of progress, hope has ended Miami Negro says. 1968. *Miami Herald*, 5 April, 20A.
- Feldkamp, Robert H. 1968. Tattered "army of the poor" reaches D.C. promised land. *Miami Herald*, 14 May, 1A.
- Florida Negroes are pessimistic. 1968. *Miami Herald*, 5 April, 13A.
- Foley, Michael. 1988. A challenging new dimension to service. *The Irish Times*, 1 April, 23.
- Forrestal casualty list includes six local men. 1967. *Florida Times-Union*, August 1, B-1.
- Forty years of service, 1925-1965. 1965. *Miami News Supplement*, 14 July, 12.
- Friedman, Saul, 1968. Choice is massive change or riots. *Miami Herald*, 15 May, 10A.
- Gordon, M. 1996. Civic journalism: Involving the public. *Seattle Times*, 17 April, B5.
- Gould, Jack. 1949. The FCC issues a report on the right of broadcasters to air their views. *New York Times*, 12 June, 9.
- Grace, Arthur. 1957. Renick takes a big step without any controversy. *Miami News*, 9 September, 12A.
- Green, J.C. 1966. Grand jury blasts city in car purchases, use. *Times-Union*, August 13, A-1.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1966. Grand jury probe into alleged city waste is ordered. *Florida Times-Union*, May 28, A-1.

- Gruzner, Charles. 1968. End papers. *New York Times*, 13 April, 23.
- Guardsmen leaving Milwaukee as Detroit emergency ends. 1967. *Florida Times-Union*, August 8, A-1.
- Hoey, Tom. 1967. Most Neptune residents at meet oppose merger. *Florida Times-Union*, July 14, B-1.
- Hughes, Frank. 1947. The professors and the press. *Chicago Tribune*, 27 April, 22F.
- It's the silly season again. 1967. Editorial, *Clearwater Sun*, 19 April.
- Jacobs, Sam. 1973. Goldberg would strengthen law on dirty restaurants. *Miami Herald*, 12 May, 2B.
- Langguth, Jack. 1963. 3 in sit-in beaten at Jackson store. *New York Times*, 29 May, 1.
- Lundy, Walker. 1966. An aggressive grand jury drops political bombs. *Cocoa Today*, 30 October.
- Major merchants will integrate sales force. 1963. *Orlando Sentinel*, 11 June, A1.
- Martin, Richard. 1967. We recommend consolidation. *Florida Times-Union*, August 8, A-1.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1967. Consolidation proposal faces final test at polls tomorrow. *Florida Times-Union*, August 8, A-1.
- Michaels, Bob. 1981. Renick, Cronkite: Parallel goes deeper than style. *Palm Beach Post*, 3 March, 85.
- Nashville--our metro model; How goes consolidation there? 1967. *Florida Times-Union*, August 1, B-3.
- Negro gangs roam D.C.; No shooting. 1967. *Florida Times-Union*, 1 August, A-1.
- Race protest start vowed in St. Johns. 1964. *Florida Times-Union*, 27 May, 29.

- Radio editorials. 1949. *New York Times*, 4 June, 12L.
- Rasmussen, Maria. 1967. 100,000 turnout is forecast today for merger vote. *Florida Times-Union*, 8 August, A-1.
- Roberts, Jack. 1966. The carpers. *Miami News*, 16 September, 3A.
- Shatzin, Kate. 1999. Ways to shake up the news media; Innovation. *Baltimore Sun*, 8 August, 2A.
- Shister, Neil. 1982. The Renick regime turns 30. *Miami Herald*, 10 November, TV Section, 5.
- Sigler, Joe. 1967. Consolidation scores big victory. *Florida Times-Union*, 9 August, A-1.
- Sosin, Milt. 1967. Gunman sentenced for Renick threat. *Miami Herald*, 26 January, 3A.
- Special study of riots urged. 1967. *Florida Times-Union*, 1 August, A-1
- St. Augustine mob attacks Negroes. 1964. *New York Times*, 26 June, 1.
- Stadium brawl blamed on troublemakers seeking to exploit racism. 1968. *Orlando Sentinel*, 29 September, 10A.
- Two members of council endorse consolidation. 1997. *Florida Times-Union*, 12 July, B1.
- UPI. 1967. 637<sup>th</sup> U.S. plane felled over North. *Florida Times-Union*, 8 August, A-1.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1967. House votes \$75 million anticrime bill. *Florida Times-Union*, 9 August, A-1.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1967. Warships shell Red positions. *Florida Times-Union*, 9 August, A-1.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1967. U.S. employment hits record high in July; Decline erased. *Florida Times-Union*, 9 August, A-1
- Volker, Al. 1973. Restaurateurs: Publicity hurts. *Miami News*, 15 May, 1A



Waldron, Martin. 1966. TV station stirs Florida inquiry. *New York Times*, 31 July.

Wife of TV's Ralph Renick dies after long illness. 1964. *Miami Herald*, 14 June, 3A.

Woods, Sherry. 1977. What keeps Renick on top. *Miami News*, 19 January, 7A.

Yardley, J. 1996. Fast Eddie slows down. *Atlanta Constitution*, 7 January, 8c.

#### Speeches and Addresses

Billinglea, Robert. 1988. Address at Chamber of Commerce luncheon honoring Brechner, Radisson Hotel, Lake Ivanhoe, 8 March.

Fellows, Harold. 1959. Address to the NAB, Chicago: 1. Cited in Cusack, 193.

Doerfer, John C. 1958. Editorially speaking - a time for action. Address to the National Association of Broadcasters, Los Angeles: 29 April. Cited in Cusack, 2.

Renick, Ralph. Address, 13<sup>th</sup> Annual RTNDA Convention, Chicago: 16 October, 4. Cited in Ashdown, 72.

Wolfson, Mitchell. 1963. Statement before the Subcommittee on Communications and Power of the House Interstate Foreign Commerce Committee, 20 September. Cited in Flannery, 14-15.

#### Studies, Surveys, and Reports

Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut, The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center and the Newseum. 1999. Freedom Forum survey. <http://www.freedomforum.org/first/sofa/1999/welcome>.

First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University. 1999. State of the First Amendment: A survey of public Attitudes, a Freedom Forum survey, Nashville, TN.

Kerner, Otto (Chmn). 1968. Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, New York: New York Times Co.

Local Government Study Commission of Duval County. 1966. Blueprint for improvement, Jacksonville, FL.

Mitchell, R.O.(Chmn.). 1965. Racial and civil disorders in St. Augustine. Report of the Legislative Investigation Committee, February, Tallahassee, FL.

Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center and the Newseum. 1997. Newseum survey. <http://www.freedomforum.org/index.html>.

Rosen, Jay. 1993. Community connectedness: Passwords for public journalism. The Poynter Papers: No. 3, The Poynter Institute for Media Studies, St. Petersburg, FL.

Schaffer, Jan, and Miller, Edward D. eds. 1995. Civic journalism: Six case studies. Pew Center for Civic Journalism and The Poynter Institute for Media Studies, Washington, DC.

Thorsen, Esther, and Friedland, Lewis A. 1996. Civic lessons, Philadelphia: Pew Center for Civic Journalism.

#### Unpublished Manuscripts

Brechner, Joe. Circa 1990. What I always say, Orlando, FL.

Glover, Joe. 1997. Media influence on city-county consolidation in Jacksonville and Duval County, Florida, 1967, Gainesville, FL: University of Florida.

#### Web Sites

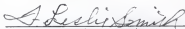
Pew Center for Civic Journalism, [Http://www.pewcenter.org](http://www.pewcenter.org)

Poynter Institute, <Http://www.poynter.org/connect.htm>

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

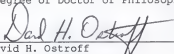
Joseph Lawrence Glover received his bachelor's degree from the University of Miami in 1961. He spent the next thirty-five years working in radio and television news, stopping in markets, large and small, all over the country. He worked in Miami, West Palm Beach, Jacksonville, New York, New Orleans, Sacramento, San Francisco, Salinas, and Detroit. He reported from Korea, Germany, Italy, the Caribbean, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. After semi-retiring to scuba dive for two years, he returned to academia, receiving his master's degree from the University of Florida in 1997 and then stayed to pursue his doctoral degree at UF. He will begin work as an assistant professor of telecommunication at the University of Florida in fall 2000.

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



F. Leslie Smith, Chairman  
Professor of Journalism and  
Communications

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



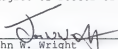
David H. Ostroff  
Professor of Journalism and  
Communications

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



Bernell E. Tripp  
Associate Professor of Journalism  
and Communications

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



John W. Wright  
Professor of Journalism and  
Communications

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Thomas P. Auxter  
Thomas P. Auxter  
Associate Professor of Philosophy

This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the College of Journalism and Communications and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

August 2000

Dean, College of Journalism and  
Communications

Dean, Graduate School

LD
1780
20 <u>00</u>

G566  
pt. 1

